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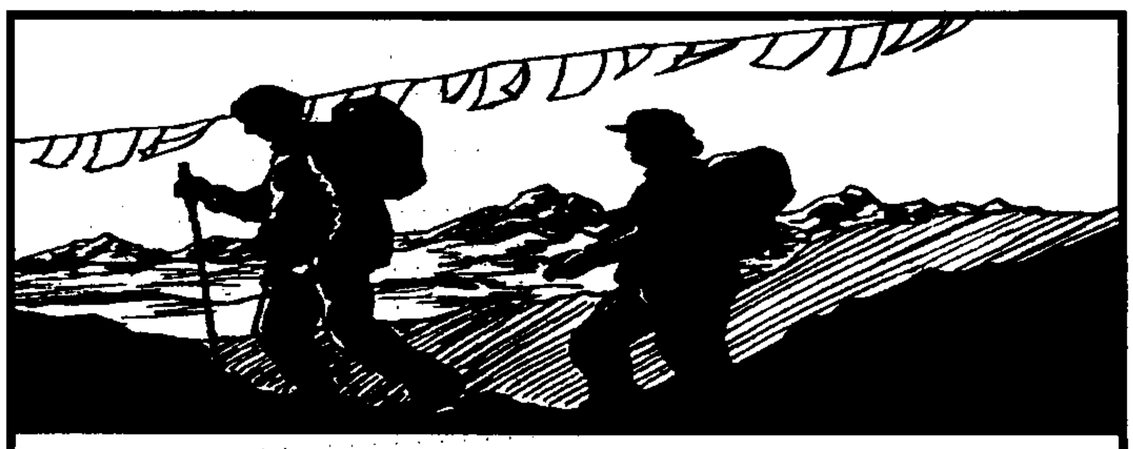

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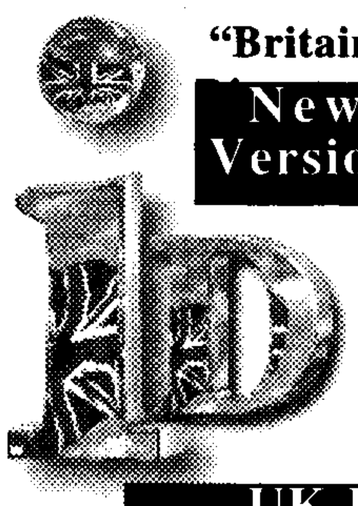

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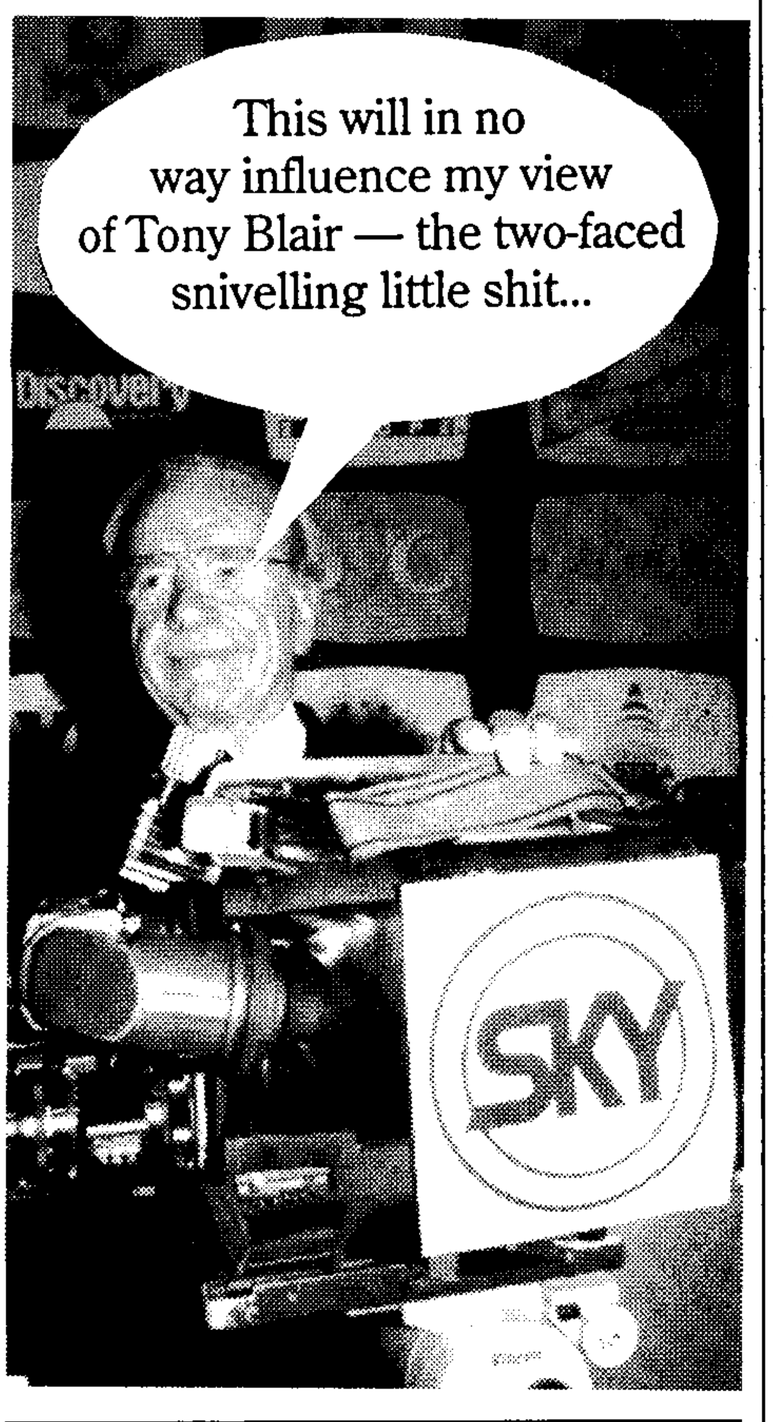

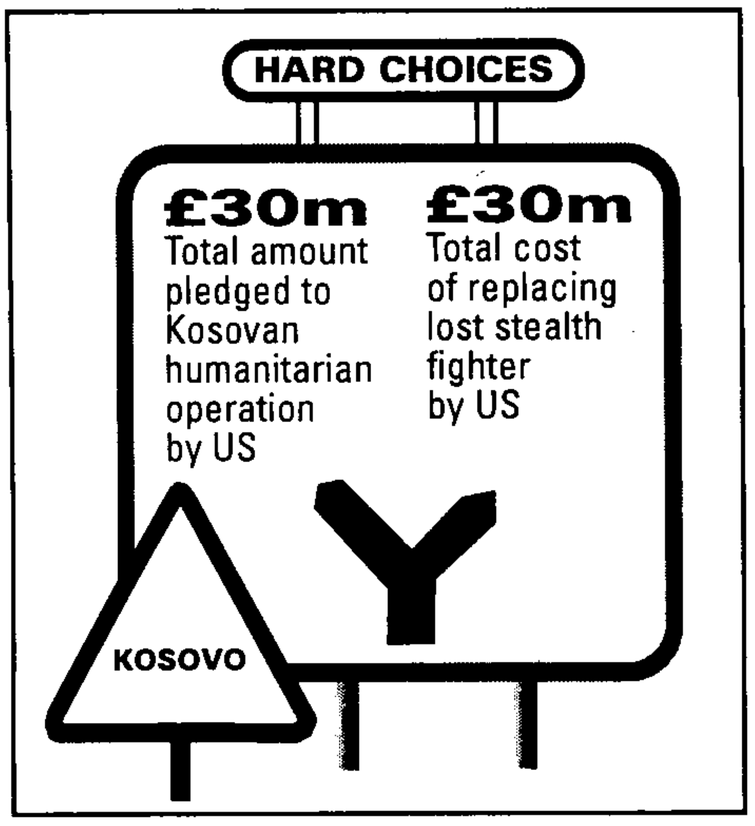

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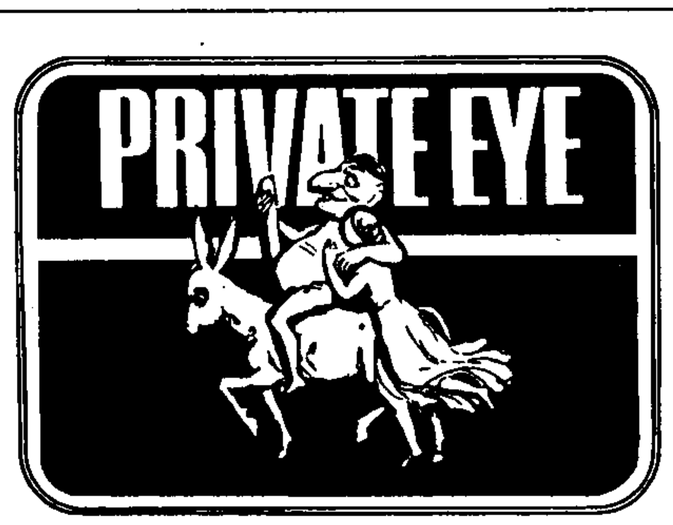

COLOUR SECTION

"NEW" Labour, in its guise as the New War Party, may be on the verge of chalking up a remarkable record as it approaches the second anniversary of its landslide election win. It is surely only a matter of time before defence analysts are able to claim that Tony Blair has dropped more bombs on Iraq and Serbia than Margaret Thatcher and John Major managed to unleash on Iraq and against the Argies over a period of 18 years. The peacenik party of Methodist ministers and Aldermaston marchers has become the war party of former Methodist ministers and former Aldermaston marchers. Verily Lord Soper and Fenner Brockway spin in their graves.

Yet strangely the war against Milosevic is not keeping the midnight oil burning in Whitehall and Downing Street. As war clouds gathered over Europe, Tony Blair told the media (not parliament, which has not been recalled throughout the Easter recess) that Nato would not be using ground troops against marauding Serb militiamen in Kosovo. As Milosevic took Nato at its word and began to cleanse Kosovo of most Kosovars, Blair retreated to Chequers, while across the pond President Clintstone even found time for a round or two of golf. The titular shadow foreign secretary Michael Howard, on the other hand, didn't even see the need to break his holiday abroad.

As the lights began to go out across Europe — or at least the Balkan bit of it — the PM's usually loquacious press secretary Alastair Campbell opted for purdah. Unlike the November bombing of Iraq, where a heavily made-up Blair was televised consulting with khaki clad tin hats in an MoD bunker, this time there have been no spun media events. Could the reason be that it may ultimately prove more difficult to put Milosevic in his cage than Saddam Hussein, who himself remains standing on top of his?

THE Serbian shootdown of an F-117 "Stealth" bomber is bad news for its maker, Lockheed, as well as for Nato.

Lockheed is currently bidding in Britain for the Astor (Airborne Stand-Off Radar) contract — a high-tech surveillance system for UK armed forces. The MOD intends to pay around £750m for Astor, which is more than 37 times the £20m Blair pledged to help Kosovan refugees.

Losing supposedly invisible planes is not great marketing, of course; especially as ministers are considering the Astor bid at this exact moment. And the stealth failure is only the latest embarrassment for the company.

On 29 March its anti-missile missile, known as Thaad (Theater High Altitude Area Defense System), failed to hit incoming missiles in New Mexico tests for the sixth consecutive time. The failure means Lockheed has been fined $15m by the Pentagon. An extra $20m will be levied on the company if it can't come up with success by June.

Another Astor bidder, with another "stealth" plane, is Northrop Grumman, which makes the B-2 "stealth" bomber — also in action over Serbia, although not (yet) downed.

The B-2 is certainly not invincible. It is the single most expensive piece of military equipment ever designed, with a per unit price of about $2bn... but it is not an unqualified success. The B-2's famed invisibility has never been shown to work. In 1995 the US general accounting office (GAO — America's version of our national audit office) found that the bomber's radar system was unable to distinguish between a mountain and a rain cloud. The GAO report concluded: "After 14 years of development... including six years of flight testing, the Air Force has yet to demonstrate that the B-2 design will meet some of its most important mission requirements."

These problems have not stopped Pentagon and Congress throwing billions at the B-2 programme. Which is of course entirely unconnected with the fact the company poured more than $700,000 into political campaigns in the 1996 election cycle — funding both Republicans and Democrats.

Northrop is currently bidding as lead contractor in the "Wizard" team, which has been taking out increasingly hysterical full page advertisements in the *New Statesman* to back its bid. Embarrassingly the ads, showing the Stars and Stripes superimposed over military-style aerial views, now appear opposite largely anti-war editorials in the *Statesman*.

The clever money, however, goes on a rival team led by Raytheon to win the contract (see *Eye* 969). Raytheon's Tomahawk missile is in service in Kosovo and has not yet been caught in any embarrassing failures. Raytheon also managed to hold on to war induced increases in its share price on the Dow Jones, where other military contractors lost their early gains. Oh — and most importantly of all, Raytheon didn't just invest in US elections. It also sponsors our own dear Labour party.

THE *Sun*'s confidence that the truckers' blockade would be bigger and better on Monday than the protest last month seemed strange. The lads on the motorway did not have the support of News International's own driving force, TNT News Fast.

It seems the *Sun*'s "Save Our Truckers" campaign does not extend to its own drivers, who were heard to complain over their bacon sarnies in the company canteen that they were not being allowed to join the blockade.

News International told the *Eye* it does not have a policy on the blockade, but oddly not a single one of its drivers wanted to turn out in Park Lane.

- *Mything the target: Serb history lesson 6*
- *Why Scotland doesn't like Tony McPhoney ...7*
- *Campaign medals for the hacks on parade 9*
- *Not so clever Trevor: Square Eyes on ITV ...10*
- *Arabian nights: there's a fug in here 11*
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- *Spring Books Special: Chatwin, Rushdie, the Spectator and more 26, 27*
- *Brothers Rich: Slicker on the Hindujas 28*

"He won't come out of the box."

NEWS

Europe In Crisis

NORMAN BAKER, the inquisitive Liberal Democrat MP for Lewes, was intrigued by the *Eye*'s revelations in February (970) about the BSE inquiry and the use of bovine material in human vaccines.

He was specially interested in the *Eye*'s hint that five years' stocks of vaccine prepared with bovine material *before* the BSE scare in 1989 were not destroyed and continued to be used in human vaccinations afterwards.

Was this true or not? He set out to find out from the health department. On 8 March he asked a series of questions which were fobbed off by junior health minister Tessa Jowell. On 16 March he tried again — and was fobbed off once more.

At last on 25 March he asked a question which had to be answered: "On which date it was decided to discontinue use of those human vaccines which in the early stage of manufacture had used bovine material prohibited for use in human food?" Moreover, when was the last date such vaccines were used on humans, and how many human vaccines made with such bovine material were disposed of?

At last came something of an answer. "No vaccine has been disposed of or discontinued because of use in the early stage of manufacture of bovine material which is prohibited for use in human food. Bovine material prohibited for use in the human food is not prohibited from use in the manufacture of medicinal products, including vaccines, but manufacturers are required to apply stringent quality measures in these materials to ensure their quality and safety. These quality measures have been in place since 1989..."

So now we know that although at least five years of vaccines made from dodgy bovine material before the 1989 restrictions were in stock that year, none was destroyed or discontinued. And at least we know that the bans on bovine material for eating don't apply to bovine material for injecting into the veins. But we still don't know how many of the old pre-1989 vaccines were used and on whom. Norman Baker is a tenacious chap, and he will go on asking questions till he gets an answer to the big one.

● Paul Foot had an emergency operation on 3rd April to repair a chest artery. He is in a serious but stable condition.

MYTHING THE TARGET

SAY what you like about Johnny Serb, he's a fearsome warrior. "Nazis don't win wars — and Serbs don't lose them," Julie Burchill drooled in the *Grauniad*, explaining the difference between Hitler and Milosevic.

In the *Daily Mail*, Balkan specialist Mark Almond wrote of the Serbs' "reputation as the most aggressive and tenacious of fighters". The *Times* noted that "Serbs will have to draw on their historical reserves, on their well-chiselled images of wartime heroism, to resist the Nato onslaught. The fact is that the Serbs are a fighting people..." The legend of invincibility has been repeated almost daily in the past month by opponents of "outside intervention", from Tony Benn to Alan Clark.

The truth, however, is that the heroic Serb warrior-race has often been defeated — or saved from ignominy by, er, outside intervention. Here is that record in full:

1813: The "First Serbian Uprising" against the Ottomans is crushed after the Russians desert their Serb allies to fight Napoleon.

1815-30: Serbia wins autonomy after the Second Uprising, but only because Russia defeats the Ottomans.

1876: Serbia declares war on the Ottoman empire and is crushingly defeated again — but manages to salvage some territorial gains (and its independence) after Russia enters the war the following year.

1885: Serbia attacks Bulgaria but is once again soundly defeated — and is rescued from Bulgarian invasion only through the intervention of her ally, Austria-Hungary.

1912-13: The Balkan wars, in which Serbia does rather better — but only as part of a coalition that enjoys huge numerical superiority. In the First Balkan War Serbia, Bulgaria, Montenegro and Greece, with combined forces of 715,000, defeat an Ottoman army of about 320,000. (It is in this war that modern Serbia occupies Kosovo for the first time.)

1914: World War I. The Serbian army (350,000 strong) rebuffs an attack from an Austro-Hungarian army numbering 250,000, which is further weakened by the fact that it is facing two enemies — Serbia and Russia — simultaneously.

1915: Serbia comes under combined attack by Germany, Austria-Hungary and Bulgaria, and is rapidly occupied.

1918: Serbia is saved by her allies: a French-led force of 28 divisions (six of them Serbian) advances from Greece and drives out the Germans, Bulgarians etc. In the process the Serbian army reoccupies Kosovo, something it would never have achieved, ironically, without British, French and (indirectly) American military intervention against its enemies. World War I is also remarkable for the fact that Serbs fought in large numbers on both sides, a point often

"Thank you for choosing this pavement. We hope you have enjoyed your journey"

HARD CHOICES
20,000
minimum estimate of number of troops needed for ground intervention to which Nato initially refused to commit
20,000
number of Nato troops already committed on ground in region by this week
KOSOVO

ignored: the supreme commander of Austro-Hungarian forces on the Italian front from 1915-18 was a Serb.

1941: Yugoslavia is attacked by Germany, which succeeds in occupying the country in just 11 days at the cost of 151 German dead. The victory is one of Hitler's easiest: the Serbian-dominated Yugoslav army melts away almost at once. In the summer, a fullscale rebellion against the Axis powers breaks out across occupied Yugoslavia — but the resistance movement can scarcely be described as "Serbian". It is spearheaded by the Communist Party of Yugoslavia (KPJ), whose secretary is a Croat — Josip Broz Tito — and which is committed to destroying Serbian hegemony within Yugoslavia.

In Serbia proper, nationalists and army officers participate half-heartedly in the rebellion under the leadership of Draza Mihailovic, but by late October they have begun attacking Tito's Partisans and seeking collaboration with the Germans. By the end of the year, the Germans have all but crushed the rebellion in Serbia with the active assistance of Serbian officers and policemen.

1942-4: Contrary to myth, resistance to the Axis in Serbia is weaker than in most other parts of Yugoslavia. By the end of 1942, Serbia is contributing two brigades to the Partisans as against Slovenia's four, Bosnia-Hercegovina's 10 and Croatia's 18. Serb nationalism plays no part in the Partisan movement — being the ideology of the rival Chetniks, which in fact collaborate with the Germans and Italians. (The Chetniks' virulent anti-semitism, and their frequent portrayal of the Partisans as "Jewish", made them natural fellow-travellers of the fascist occupiers, fighting for a "Greater Serbia, ethnically clean".)

1990s: World War II represented a crushing defeat for Serbian territorial ambitions: Macedonia and Montenegro won independence from Serbia, the Serbo-Croat partition of Bosnia-Hercegovina was abandoned, and Yugoslavia was organised federally to preclude any return to Serbian dominance. More than 40 years on, Slobodan Milosevic tries to avenge the nationalists' defeat by redrawing the map. But in the wars of 1991-5 Serbia's eyes prove too big for its stomach.

1991-2: The Serbian-dominated Yugoslav People's Army (JNA) is fought to a standstill and brought to the verge of collapse by less well armed Croatian forces. Once again, outside intervention — this time the western alliance's "Vance Plan" — rescues Serbia from defeat by allowing the crumbling JNA to withdraw from Croatia without loss of occupied territory.

1995: The army of the Serb Republic, an offshoot of the JNA, faces certain destruction at the hands of the Bosnian and Croatian armies — but is again rescued, this time by the Dayton agreement and the US-enforced ceasefire of October 1995.

1999: Nato starts its air campaign, and all the old myths about Johnny Serb's fierce martial prowess are resurrected. In fact, Serbia's military performance during the 19th and 20th centuries has been little better or worse than that of other Balkan states such as Bulgaria, Greece or Turkey. There is no evidence that Serbians are any more ready to fight fanatically and die for their country than the people of most other European countries. As so often in the past, whether Serbia will be invincible or bankrupt depends on the policies and actions of more powerful states.

IN THE TEAROOM

IT's now part of standing orders for Labour candidates winning any kind of election to start their victory speeches with the mantra: "This result would never have been possible without Tony and the incredible transformation that is 'new' Labour."

Fair enough in 1997 — it really was Blair wot won it. But if Labour does squeak through to a majority in next month's elections to the Scottish parliament, it will be a downright lie.

The campaign high command in Scotland is begging party HQ to stay away. No Alastair Campbell complete with bagpipes, thank you; no clever young things from Millbank. North of the border, every time a Labour moderniser from London opens his mouth, a thousand voters defect to the SNP.

Blair himself doesn't even need to get on the plane to alienate Scottish working class voters. Last month he gave a speech to the mysterious Number Nine dining society at London's Caledonian club. This motley collection of freemasons, Edinburgh stockbrokers and men'o'pairts cheered like anything as the prime minister told them: "In this uncertain world no one can guarantee jobs for life, that's for sure." Strangely, ordinary voters were less enthusiastic about the PM's endorsement for the radical downsizing of Scottish industry.

Scottish secretary Donald Dewar understands very well that Scotland is, essentially, "old" Labour and that the Anthony Giddensist third way doesn't play in Cowdenbeath. He's set up his own team — including former special adviser Wendy Alexander, now a prospective MSP — to fight the election with minimum "help" from London.

Back at Millbank the Scottish crew is regarded with bafflement and suspicion. Keith Geddes, an Edinburgh councillor, was at the centre of a cronyism row when, having failed to be selected for a first-past-the-post seat, he was put top of the south of Scotland regional list. This means he must be a leadership favourite (A Good Thing); but it also means he must be a pretty pisspoor operator not to have "fixed" his own selection. Is this the kind of guy you should trust to speak on education during the campaign?

Others, such as Dundee council leader Kate MacLean and social inclusion spokesperson Jackie Baillie have zero name recognition among the London apparatchiks. An all too familiar face, though, is maverick Dundee East MP John Macallion, regarded as Scotland's answer to Rhodri Morgan. He is supposed to spend the election talking about the "new deal" — but will find much of his time taken up guarding his back against a London-inspired plot to spike his chances of being elected deputy leader.

'Urquhart'

LABOUR's fear of leftwing national executive committee member Liz Davies knows no bounds — or international boundaries.
The Blairites cannot forgive her for the court trouncing that the barrister Davies helped mete out to five young whipper-snappers who had ludicrously claimed that the then Islington councillor had fomented "a riot" over local education cuts.
Prior to Tony Blair's visit to South Africa earlier this year, a former college chum of Davies, now resident in Cape Town, was surprised to receive a visit from a "new" Labour apparatchik, seconded to the ruling ANC, whom she and her partner had befriended. Unbeknown to them, Blair's boy had espied a graduation picture of Davies in a downstairs room, and his task, he solemnly intoned, was to advise Davies' friend that she "would not be welcome" at any of Tony's prestigious photo-calls. Amid much wailing and gnashing of teeth, Davies's chum pretended to be "deeply disappointed".

WHEN Newark MP Fiona Jones was expelled from the Commons following her conviction for electoral fraud, it was assumed the by-election would be held on 6 May, the date of the local council polls. But Labour chiefs have changed their mind, blocking an attempt to move the writ for the by-election — presumably because they know that the Tories might well win.

Their official reason, however, is that it would be unjust to hold a contest before Jones's appeal against conviction, which was due to be heard this week. If she wins the appeal, Labour says, "there would be no need for a by-election".

Utter nonsense, of course. Under electoral law the corrupt Blair-babe was automatically disqualified as soon as she was found guilty, regardless of the result of her appeal, and the speaker has already declared the seat vacant.

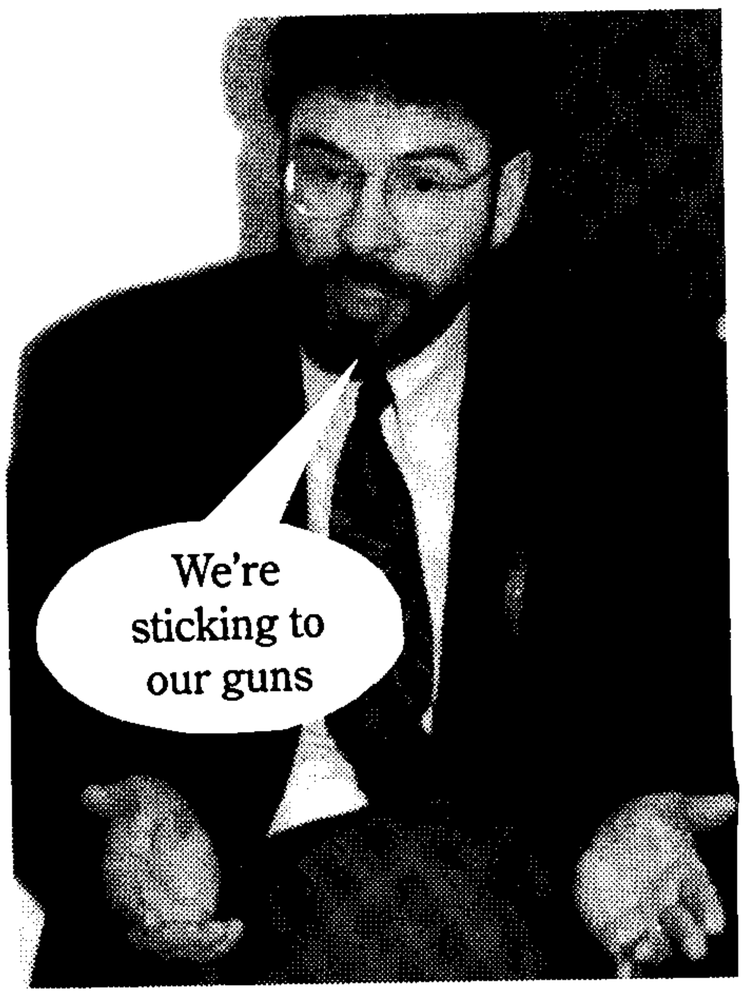
This means that Jones's constituents will remain unrepresented until June at the earliest. Meanwhile, the MP for the neighbouring seat of Bassetlaw, Joe Ashton, seems unlikely to take on much of her casework as he too is keeping a low profile after being caught with his trousers down in a Thai massage parlour. So who does that leave as the only effective remaining parliamentary representative for the people of Newark, the one person to whom constituents can take their concerns? Local MEP Ken Coates — expelled by "new" Labour last year!

WHEN the courts ruled that a strike by RMT members on London Underground would be illegal, spartite executive member Pat Sikorski denounced the Tories' anti-union legislation, which he said was responsible for this insult to the membership.

He demanded instead that the union forge ahead with what would have been an illegal strike. But when Sikorski, an active member of the Scargillite Socialist Labour Party, realised that the RMT's deputy general secretary Vernon Hince had won more votes than him in the recent deputy general secretary elections, he made a bee-line for m'learned friends.

Using the, er, hated Tory legislation, m'learned friends successfully demanded that the election be rerun because an advisory note describing the proportional election system governing the election had not accompanied the ballot papers. The explanatory note had accompanied the vote for the job of general secretary — won by Jimmy Knapp against another spartist, Greg Tucker, and which had arrived

ULSTER SHOCK



on members' doorsteps at exactly the same time. Sikorski's heroic action on behalf of the working class is reckoned to have cost the impoverished rail union in the region of £60,000.

AN 'onest copper on late shift at the Palace of Westminster thought it safe to lock up the seemingly deserted Lords' car park in the early hours of Wednesday 31 March.

But he had failed to notice that Lord Hogg of Cumbernauld was standing in the shadowed porch. When the good lord made his presence known, the lowly constable apologised — but Hogg was in no mood for conciliation. He ranted and raged and refused to be pacified until Black Rod had been called to escort the offending PC off the premises.

MORALE among the humble galley-slaves of Whitehall was greatly boosted earlier this year by a barnstorming speech from Tony Blair.

"We inherited an undervalued public sector," the prime minister declared. "It is absurd that we ever got into the position under the previous administration where government seemed to devalue the very people it relied upon to deliver its programme. Where private was always best. Where the public sector was always demonised as inefficient... So let me say today, loud and clear — this government values public service, this government is proud of its public servants... It is not just a job. It is a vocation."

And how does "new" Labour prove its commitment to cherishing public servants? By sacking them and privatising them, of course.

In February, less than a month after Blair's speech, treasury minister Patricia Hewitt received a report from the consultants KPMG on improving efficiency at the Office of National Statistics (ONS). It concluded that about one third of the staff should go, either through natural wastage or by having their jobs given to private firms.

Although ONS was charged for this review (£116,000 plus VAT, expenses etc), it wasn't actually allowed to see the report until after Hewitt had accepted the conclusions. She has already been babbling excitedly about how KPMG's proposals for "outsourcing" (ie privatising) will "allow ONS to focus professional resources and management attention".

But here's a funny thing. Last month the magazine *Computer Personnel* carried an interview with one Bob Aylott, who attacked "outsourcing" as a form of intellectual asset-stripping. The result, he said, was that "both intellectual capital — valuable people — and intellectual property — software and so on — are lost... Staff in these areas possess knowledge which is vital to future competitiveness and even survival. Moving these functions out of house leads to the loss of these core people."

And who is Bob Aylott? Er... principal consultant at KPMG.

'Backbiter'

Street Of Shame

THE Eurosceptic *Sun* and *Daily Mail* are rapidly losing the plot. As Tony Blair's choice for European commission president Romano Prodi called for a "common European soul", frothing leader writers on both newspapers announced that with Prodi's federalist intentions now laid bare, "Tony Blair would be hugely embarrassed". Not a bit of it.

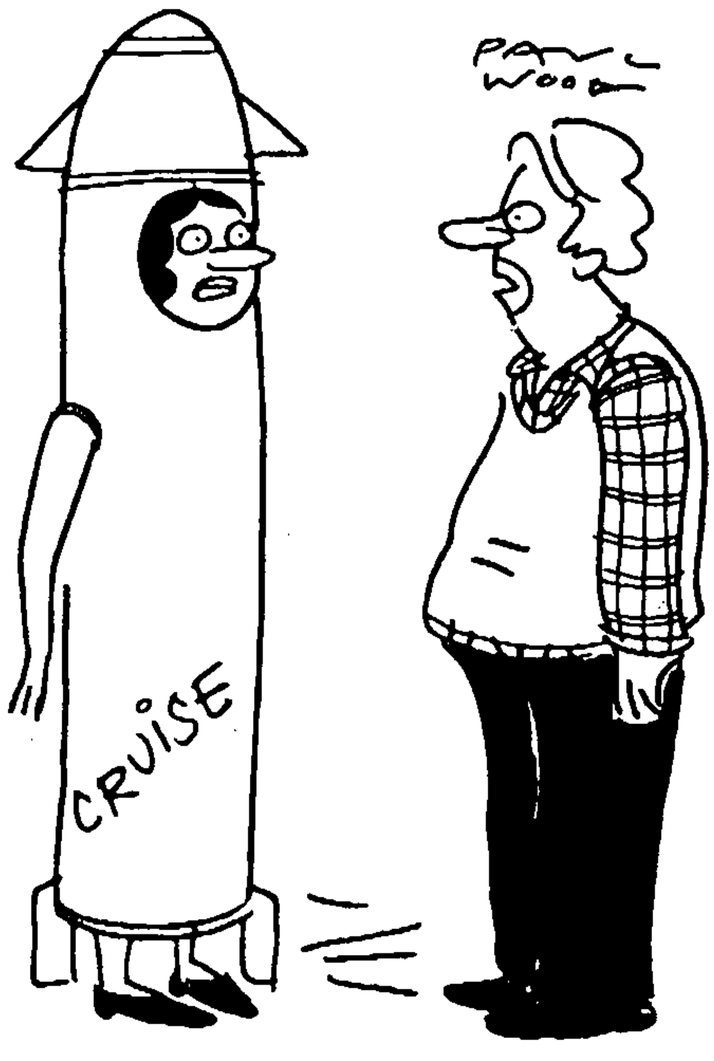
Prodi's federalist ambitions had been a recommendation for Blair to support Prodi for Europe's top job. With his fear of a hostile Murdoch backlash to the single currency fast diminishing with each opinion poll showing a diminishing degree of hostility to the project among the British public, Blair and pro-EMU ministers are one step ahead of the sceptic press.

After a tremendous round of mutual backslapping between the British and Germans following the abrupt departure of "Red" Oskar Lafontaine, the *Sun* has failed to notice that Blairite Third Way mumbo-jumbo is being eagerly embraced by the German chancellor Gerhard Schroeder. A new German version of the Blairite bible on the Third Way by Professor Anthony Giddens even has a foreword by the Dear Leader. While Tony's little German affairs helper, Peter Mandelson, has teamed up with Schroeder's eminence grise, Bodo Hombach, to cleanse the German Social Democrats of any remaining social democratic tendencies.

Poor old Rupert doesn't yet get it: Britain won't have to join with Germany and buy into high spending, redistributive policies: Germany is going to join Britain in cutting red tape, importing flexible working and low pay. Notwithstanding his Manchester United disappointment, when Rupert does stumble on the plot he will order the *Sun*'s pisspoor editor David Yelland to do a U-turn and lead the campaign for the single currency and "President Blair of Europe".

THE *Sun*'s picture desk is nothing if not organised — hence its fax to the Chinese Airport Authority asking it to accredit a *Sun* snapper "to cover the opening of the new Hong Kong airport over the Christmas period for 1999".

The authority was willing to issue the permit, but feared it would be of little use. Without consulting *Sun* picture chief Ken Lennox, Hong Kong's new airport opened in July 1998.



"Why, darling, you look like a million dollars"

CONGRATULATIONS to chivalrous *Sindie* editor Kim Fletcher for gallantly defending his wife, *Daily Telegraph* deputy editrix Sarah Sands, against the vile insinuations of Max "Hitler" Hastings.

The trouble started when *Evening Standard* columnist A.N. Wislon sent a note to Hitler grumbling that the paper had gone slightly off the rails since la Sands departed to the Torygraph. "I'm sorry that the small, perfectly-formed Sarah Sands is no longer here to look after you," Hastings replied crossly, "but James Hanning [a features executive] will sleep with you instead."

Wislon indiscreetly mentioned this to Kim Fletcher at the *Sindie* ` who immediately fired off a curt missive to Hitler Hastings: "Dear Max, I would be grateful if you would explain the purpose of your offensive letter to Andrew Wilson which seriously defames my wife."

Hastings did not answer. After a further ultimatum, however, he has now apologised to Sands with his usual graciousness, adding: "I'm frankly furious that this nonsense has been misunderstood." *Evening Standard* hacks would be well-advised to keep their heads down for the next few weeks: when Hitler is in a "frankly furious" mood, the collateral damage can be terrible indeed.

RIVALRY has intensified between London listings mag *Time Out* and the *Evening Standard*'s weekly listings supplement *Hot Tickets*.

Hot Tickets' features writer Tim Lusher recently rang various London PR agencies asking for exclusive celebrity interviews on the ground that *TO* is "unreliable" and "passé".

These slurs found their way back to *TO*, which duly plotted its revenge. And so it was that Lusher soon received a call from a PR with a Texan accent, who claimed to be Madonna's UK representative.

Unmoved by the unconvincing Yank's sarcastic comment that "the *Standard* is worth every penny, especially when it's 10p", Lusher rang the contact number he had been given. The outcome of his hoped-for tête-à-tête with La Ciccione? A ticking off from the madame of a north London brothel.

THE Daily Mail devoted two pages on 3 April to an interview between showbiz hack Rebecca Hardy and a pop music manager called Nigel Martin-Smith.

In the sob piece, Nigel poured out his heart about how his boy-band Take That disintegrated in 1995: "women, drink and drugs destroyed the dream", and so on.

All this is very odd. For in that same year, Martin-Smith consulted the esteemed legal firm of Peter F. Carter Fuck and Partners about an article in *Private Eye* which had suggested that... Take That's behaviour left a lot to be desired.

Fuck wrote to the *Eye* indicating that the band intended to treat the story "with the contempt it deserves", but in the meantime it wanted an apology to be read out in the high court, substantial libel damages and (inevitably much higher) legal costs, as well as an undertaking not to say anything negative about the band or any of its distinguished members ever again.

The *Eye* wrote back defending the accuracy of our story and the band — wisely, in the circumstances — decided against troubling Mr Justice Popplewell and let the claim drop. As it happens, the *Eye* story was considerably less defamatory than Martin-Smith's comments about Robbie Williams in the *Mail* — but presumably time has changed his perspective.

PRINCE Charles's trip to Argentina generated a glut of stories last month, but his stopover in Uruguay on the way home did not. Starved of facts in anticipation of the royal visit, desperate *Times* hack Robin Young gave readers a pocket guide to Uruguayan culture.

His list of little-known trivia ended with the snippet: "Among the idiosyncrasies of Uruguayan law, it is notable that a husband who finds his wife in bed with another man can claim the right to cut off her nose and castrate her lover".

In fact no such law exists, as the Uruguay government angrily pointed out to the British foreign office, forcing the *Times* to print a correction. The scandal made front page news in Uruguay's *El Pais*.

Young, who has never visited Uruguay, revealed meanwhile that he first learnt of this shocking and barbaric custom from an article on "101 silly laws against sex" in that well-known guide to Latin-American culture, *The People*.

TV ACTRESS Nicola McAuliffe and her husband Don Mackay were among the favoured few attending Prince Charles's "cultural" weekend at Sandringham recently.

When the invitation arrived, Mackay felt dutybound to warn the prince's office that he is not only McAuliffe's husband but also a hack on the *Daily Mirror*. (It was he, indeed, who smashed the Mirror's cherished British Press Award during a fracas at a boozy dinner last month.) But a royal flunkey assured him that Charles was already well aware of Mackay's position below the salt, and very much wanted him to come.

The reason for allowing a tabloid hack into the inner sanctum became apparent on the Sunday morning, when a crowd of royal reporters and photographers gathered outside Sandringham hoping to catch a glimpse of Charles and his guests. "Get rid of them, will you, Don?" the prince said. And thus it was that the astonished reptiles at the gates saw the familiar figure of their Mirror colleague striding down the drive and telling them, by royal command, to clear off.

FAITHFUL *Grauniad* readers and hacks are puzzled and dismayed at the dumbing down of parts of their paper. Has editor Alan Rusbridger taken his eye off the ball, they ask, and become Alan Rubbisher?

Concern centres on the features department and the once-admired G2 section. As war hotted up in Kosovo last week, G2 ran a series of items of staggering banality: the sort of stuff that, had it appeared in *Chat* or *Take a Break*, would make you think the mag was losing its intellectual rigour.

Tuesday's lead ("Life's a beach, then the cameras arrive") was a hard-hitting investigation into what happens to towns and villages after they are used as TV locations. "The towns that TV transformed" all got an "ironic" paragraph or two under a still from the show in question: Salford (*Coronation St*), Oxford (*Inspector Morse*), Holmfirth (*Last of the Summer Wine*), etc, etc, plus some big pix of scantily-clad *Baywatch* totty.

Wednesday saw an item headed "A call to arms". This was not about Kosovo. Pegged to the important news that Posh Spice and David Beckham are having a personal crest designed for their wedding invitation, it pictured six B-list "celebrity" couples (Liam Gallagher and Patsy Kensit, James Major and Emma Noble, William and Ffion Hague, etc) and the unfunny, badly-drawn coats of arms they might have commissioned (except that they haven't). Thursday's lead was only slightly more challenging: "The kids who make their [famous] parents cringe". And so on — in the section that brought you the great Patti Boulaye "It was time to support apartheid" cock-up two weeks earlier.

So who is responsible for the tide of trivia? Step forward ambitious features editor Ian Katz; an amiable chap, but not someone you would want on your side in the pub quiz team. Katz has further alienated many staff by largely refusing to run any of their features, preferring instead to commission from the ranks of freelances who supply the Sunday style sections with the sort of guff now in demand at the *Grauniad*. As a picket of Liverpool dockers and sundry spartists demonstrated this week in Farringdon Road against the sacking of columnist Mark Steel for being too left-wing, many staff must have been tempted to join them.

HACKWATCH

Campaign Medals

Most Considered Opinion

"I've finally found a British military engagement I'm violently opposed to," Julie Burchill revealed in the *Guardian* on 3 April. And why? Because the Germans support it.

"I never dreamed I'd see my country going to war on the same side as the Luftwaffe. Simple, really... Who died and made the Germans king? That's what I want to know... Scratch a Croat, find a Kraut... Blair keeps telling us that it's legit, because it's just like the second world war. He's right... Side by side with our buddies the Luftwaffe, we're the Fascists."

By last Saturday her opinions were even more measured and mature. Number 30 in a list of "40 reasons why the Serbs are not the new Nazis and the Kosovars are not the new Jews", was: "Because the Serbs have a really cool salute and the Nazis had a silly one." She gets full marks for effort: no columnist tries more desperately than Burchill to draw attention to herself.

Most Tasteful Analogy

Several judges nominated Alexander Chancellor's brilliantly self-parodying column from the *Guardian* on 3 April.

"The war over Kosovo has been making me miserable," he confessed, "because I cannot begin to understand what it is all about." But he understood rather better after his rail journey back to London from an agreeable country-house weekend in Somerset. "The first-class carriage in which I had sought solitude to work was invaded by scores of distraught refugees from Cornwall. They had started their journey in Truro, but at Plymouth they had been ordered off their train because it was leaking oil."

Worse still there was then "an enormous queue for taxis" when Chancellor's train finally reached Paddington. As he concluded: "One of the pleasures of living in England in the past was that one never had to endure any of the hardships of an Albanian refugee, but now it is possible to get a glimpse of their sufferings by the simple device of purchasing an expensive ticket from Great Western trains."

However, the outright winner was Sir Peregrine Worsthorne for his column in the *Independent on Sunday* of 4 April. Since he retired to Buckinghamshire a few years ago, his rustic bliss had been invaded by "what can only be described as alien forces". First there was the widening of the M40, and then a successful planning application by Tesco to erect a superstore on the site of the old railway station. Now there was talk of a new car park. "Compared to ethnic cleansing such threats are indeed paltry," he conceded. "But the feelings of outrage, of injustice, of, in a word, enmity which these threats arouse are not wholly different. For if these developments take place we, too, will be driven from our homes." One trusts the Red Cross will sponsor an emergency airlift to send tents and food parcels to Worsthorne Acres at once.

Most Sensitive Flower

"There is an uncomfortable element of jingoism underlying some of the reporting. I heard one reporter describing how missiles had `slammed' into their targets in Montenegro... We are getting a war covered as if it were a football or boxing match." So wrote Richard Littlejohn in his column of 26 March in the *Sun*... the paper which marked the outbreak of war with the huge front-page headline CLOBBA SLOBBA.

Most Modest Headline

In an odd bit of self-promotion, on 10 April the *Sunday Times* chose to make Jon Swain, its man on the spot, the paper's front-page lead. *Inside the Kosovo cauldron — Sunday Times writer crosses border to file first account of villages in flames*, it boasted, apparently forgetting that other hacks have been dodging bombs in Belgrade for quite some time now, and days before a French reporter was filing from a Kosovo ditch with the KLA.

Most Loyal Soldier

"Let there be no mistake: this country is at war," Sir Peter de la Billiere wrote in the *Daily Mail* on 7 April. "This, then, is no time for weakened resolve, casual criticism at home, or for political point-scoring. It is a time to rally behind the government and the armed forces, and to support our leaders, political and military, as they grapple with immense decisions."

Some retired generals have not been so uncritical. Take the one who wrote on 29 March that Milosevic was in a strong position: "He knows — because Clinton and Blair have said so — that the allies have no stomach for fighting their way into Kosovo by sending in the ground troops... Milosevic appears to be following the example set by Saddam. I hope he fails — my growing fear is that he may succeed." Two days later, the same commentator noted that the emptying of Kosovo represented "an overwhelming and almost certainly irreversible victory for Milosevic and his military and paramilitary thugs". On 2 April he attacked the "myth" that air-strikes would work: "Air power alone has seldom if ever proved sufficient to break the will and military might of a determined nation." By 5 April he delivered another morale-lowering bulletin: "I fear that the successful campaign of attrition from the air — only one instrument in the orchestra of war — may not be enough to achieve Mr Blair's objective." And two days later, while Sir Peter de la Billiere was urging everyone to rally behind our leaders, this congenital carper was still attacking the government for not sending more ground troops to the Balkans before the bombing started. "It is more alarming that there is no indication — however belatedly — that the build-up is beginning... We succeeded in the Gulf War and Falklands War because we were prepared for all eventualities — we are not yet so prepared in the Balkans."

Who is this gloom-monger? Step forward, Sir Peter de la Billiere.

Most Versatile Soldier

"General Sir Michael Rose told the Commons Defence Select Committee that air-strikes were the best means of preventing further ethnic cleansing and atrocities in the province."

— *Independent*, 4 February 1999.

"Correctly, in my view, the deployment of Nato troops in an interventionist, warfighting role in Kosovo has already been politically excluded from future military options."

— General Sir Michael Rose, the *Times*, 26 March.

"Send in troops on the ground... The military lesson is one known to first-year students at staff college — troops on the ground are far more effective than air strikes... Slobodan Milosevic knows this as well as I do... Air strikes have only strengthened his hand."

— General Sir Michael Rose, *Mirror*, 27 March.

Most Elegant Prose

Harold Pinter is often tipped to win the Nobel Prize for Literature, and now we know why. "US foreign policy can be defined as follows: `Kiss my arse or I'll kick your head in'," he wrote in the *Guardian* on 8 April. "Milosevic refused to kiss America's arse so Clinton is kicking in the head of the Serbian people... Blair is the one who kisses Clinton's arse fervently and dreams that he is Mrs Thatcher." Having delivered this thoughtful assessment, Pinter went on to protest at the "pathetic if not infantile" level of intelligence displayed in the Balkan debate.

Best Rapport With Readers

"Prime Minister Tony Blair tells the *Sun* today that ground troops will NOT be sent in. We totally agree. And today we pledge: If Blair changes his mind he will NOT have the support of the Sun... So-called experts here and in America are lining up, demanding a ground war. This is MADNESS."

— Front-page editorial ("The *Sun* speaks its mind") on 5 April.

"Sun readers voted by 2,289 and 1,219 in a You The Jury poll that Nato ground troops SHOULD be sent into Kosovo."

— Tiny news item on page 4 of the *Sun*, 6 April, apparently confirming that *Sun* readers are, er, mad.

Most Heroic Selflessness

Alice Thomson of the *Daily Telegraph* came up with an inspired solution to the refugee crisis on 7 April. Since "people in the Home Counties" are finding it hard to recruit domestic staff who will work for a pittance, "the answer must be to allow some Kosovars to apply for jobs in Britain, so they can work as cleaners, nannies..."

WORLD OF SPORT

JEAN-CLAUDE Ganga may be gone from the international olympic committee (IOC), but he is far from forgotten.

Ganga, from the Congo, was one of six IOC members to be expelled last month in disgrace after taking backhanders and bungs in return for voting for Salt Lake City as the venue for the 2002 winter olympics. But he has nonetheless retained the presidency of the African olympic committee.

This has so embarrassed the olympics' head honcho, septuagenarian Falangist Juan-Antonio Samaranch, that he has instructed the remaining IOC members from Africa to get rid of Ganga. The message is clear: Samaranch will pay whatever it takes, though less clear is how he will manage to launder this through the IOC's books.

Samaranch's antics will do nothing to lessen the suspicion that the IOC's purge was racially prejudiced. Of the five IOC members who resigned and six others who were expelled, nine were from Africa, Asia or Latin America. Only one was European. Chief among the lucky survivors was Australian IOC member Phil Coles, who enjoyed several luxury holidays to the United States at the expense of the Salt Lake City bidding committee, and whose wife now flaunts an expensive necklace and earrings bought by the bidders. (None of these gifts are believed to come below the $150 limit the IOC has tried to impose.)

Kim Un Yong, reputed to be Samaranch's righthand man, also escaped with a "severe censure", despite his son having been given a £50,000 consultancy as a result of the Salt Lake bid. Kim is the former head of the South Korean CIA and head of the world taekwando federation. Before going into the crucial meeting to decide his fate within the IOC he was seen on the steps of a Lausanne chateau with Francois Carrard, the urbane secretary general of the IOC, and Dick Pound, the Canadian QC who headed the corruption inquiry and is seen as Kim's rival to succeed Samaranch as president. A heated argument ensued, resulting in Kim squaring up in karate-style pose.

If that threat of physical intimidation was not the sole reason for Kim being cleared, perhaps he was also assisted by some widely circulated, anonymous faxes — which included allegations that IOC rivals had had extra-marital affairs with members of the Salt Lake bidding committee, or that they had abused their IOC position to further their own business careers. "I have ammunition," Kim warned before his hearing.

By happy coincidence the IOC's next clubbable get-together, when further investigations into Kim will be reviewed, takes place in June in Seoul — Kim's own backyard.

JUST FANCY THAT!

Own up folks! Were YOU taken in by yesterday's April Fools joke in *The Sun* about Clara the giant chicken?... We also kidded about a new "LeBoeuf & Onion" flavoured crisp named after Chelsea soccer star Frank LeBoeuf..."

— The *Sun*, 2 April, page 9

LeBoeuf & Onion crisps. Ha, bloody, ha. Laugh? I had more fun when I had my wisdom teeth pulled out.

— Richard Littlejohn, the *Sun*, 2 April, page 11

Tonight With Trevor McDonald (ITV)

THE success of new look broadcasting schedules seems to be in directly inverse proportion to their reception in the newspapers.

Fledgling networks which met with critical derision — Channel 4, Sky, Radio 5 — have developed into financial or critical winners. One greeted as not as bad as expected — Channel 5 on television — has settled down to be worse than ever feared. A month ago the new look ITV schedule — created by the moving of *News At Ten* — was widely acclaimed as masterly. Ratings were soaring, the BBC was terrified. The controller of BBC1 was reported to fear for his job.

In mid-April both BBC panic and ITV jubilation seem increasingly premature. Without *Who Wants To Be A Millionaire?*, the ratings-cow of the first week of the new order, the ITV schedule looks threadbare in the late evenings. Ratings have fallen sharply from their novelty-inspired high and ITV Network Centre is gradually coming to realise that the downside of the fuss it made about new beginnings is that no new show can make a quiet entry.

Tonight With Trevor McDonald is the promise ITV made to its regulators in exchange for an agreement to move *News At Ten* from its sacred ley-line. Based on American models — *60 Minutes*, *Dateline NBC*, *Now* — this is intended to be a serious but populist news magazine show. A pack of star reporters — including Martin Bashir, *Panorama*'s Boswell to wronged women, and cheeky Jonathan Maitland from *Watchdog* — is supposed to front punchy reports introduced in the studio by McDonut in the latest stage of his quest to become a British, black Walter Cronkite.

ITV understood the importance of launching big with this and for last Thursday's debut programme they had followed some of the rules established by the format in America. But, crucially, not quite enough.

The first misjudgment was subject-matter and length. The programme was devoted to Martin Bashir's interviews with the five thugs commonly suspected of having killed Stephen Lawrence. Interviews with controversial defendants are a regular feature of this genre in America but it is generally ensured that they are defendants with a certain glamour: Michael Jackson, Dr Jack "Death" Kevorkian.

Significantly the US news shows declined to deal with O.J. Simpson because, even though he had scandalous glamour, the audience was likely to be revolted by TV giving him a platform. The same drawback applied x 5 to the Lawrence suspects. It can't be clever for an expensive new series to begin with a large percentage of the audience questioning its judgement.

And the whole point about a news magazine show is that it contains a variety of items. There are almost no circumstances in which *60 Minutes*, the American clone for ITV's show, would hand over the hour to a single subject. The success of such series depends on there being something in each programme for several different sectors of the audience. Misguided by the British journalistic prejudice that size confers importance, *Tonight* started off single-minded. But this meant that viewers saw something familiar from the medium's past — a double-length *World In Action* — rather than the noisily pledged glimpse of the future of television news.

The next problem was the series' definition of a star reporter. It is an unfortunate result of Princess Diana's willingness to give handouts to favoured hacks that certain reporters ended up with a vastly-inflated reputation: Richard Kay in newspapers, Martin Bashir in television. Because his Diana interview was history-making and award-winning, Bashir took on the appearance of a major interviewer. But, on that night, all he did was to lob previously-agreed questions in the direction of previously-written answers.

Such was the audience sympathy for Diana that this didn't matter. But, faced with an interview which calls for a result other than the one the interviewees intend, Bashir is less effective. He started in the wrong place, quibbling over the suspects spitting in public after the inquiry as if his model were Miss Manners rather than Jeremy Paxman. Getting nowhere, he resorted to uneasy machismo — enthusiastically repeating expletives in the lads' reported speech — and then to a terrible example of television egotism, asking a suspect if he regarded him, Bashir, as a "Paki", as if proof of disrespect to a TV reporter would be useful evidence of murder.

But at least Bashir had something to do. McDonald was reduced to three limp links in the studio in which he summarised what were supposed to be the new disclosures from the interviews. American viewers don't seem to resent the fact that highly-paid anchormen merely top and tail a programme. But yanks come from a presidential tradition, in which there is an inbred reverence towards authoritative men in suits. Trevor is likely to find that a British audience will question his highly-paid tangentiality. ITV may have miscalculated if it thinks people will tune in merely to see him cue up other stuff.

Finally, the whole enterprise showed television's dreadful arrogance. Where the police and the courts had failed, TV would succeed, bringing Stephen Lawrence's killers to justice. In fact the programme provoked an unlikely nostalgia for lawyers and judges. BBC1 can stop worrying that ITV is on a golden roll. *Tonight With Trevor McDonald* was an example of people getting away with murder but, unfortunately, the people in question were not the producers.

MEDIA NEWS

FOLLOWING the bogus-guests-on-daytime-TV exposés by various red tops (which followed Square Eyes' own exposures here last autumn), the *Eye* is proud to present its own in-depth investigation: *The Sheer Laziness of Chat Show Researchers.*

Christine is 38, 5'1" and 15 stone. Hubby Brian doesn't give a fig: he loves her just the way she is. But dad Charlie disagrees. He's been having a go at his girl for being chubby since she was eight and doesn't think Brian should encourage her to pile on the lard.

Thrilling stuff, eh? Well, the producers of BBC's *Kilroy* thought so when they first asked the feuding threesome on the show 18 months ago. *Chat* magazine thought so too when it interviewed Christine, the Liverpudlian clairvoyant now resident in Swansea, shortly after.

Anglia TV's *Trisha* decided Christine's story needed to be told again in the run up to Christmas, while the makers of *Sarah: Surviving Life* believed that the public interest would not be fully served until the Duchess of York had quizzed Christine on how to binge on cream cakes *and* keep your man.

Christine's most recent appearance was in a hotly contested debate hosted by *Living*'s Michael Cole, entitled: "I'm not too fat to be loved" (10 March, repeated 8 April). Anglia TV has even made a full-length documentary about her plight to be shown on ITV on 16 April.

As Christine told the *Eye*: "These researchers can't be arsed looking properly. Most of them are on work experience and they ask you not to tell the producers you have been on other shows." Spare a thought meanwhile for Vanessa Feltz. Christine declined an offer to appear on her show, claiming husband Brian couldn't afford any more time off work, confirming Ms Feltz's worst fears that her days as daytime doyenne are numbered.

GREAT outrage was expressed on Radio 4's *Today* programme before ITV's interview with the five men suspected of murdering Stephen Lawrence.

Stephen's mother Doreen dismissed Granada's *Tonight*, on which the men were to be interviewed by Martin Bashir, as a blatant attempt to "manipulate public opinion". Glen Smyth, on behalf of the Police Federation, was even more scathing, describing ITV's interviews as "a cheap publicity stunt by Granada to gain some notoriety for their new programme".

Smyth went on to condemn the behaviour of the media as "disgusting" and "wholly unsavoury" but overlooked an even less savoury incident in February involving another current affairs programme. This programme could not bag an interview with the suspects themselves, but featured an exclusive with their mothers, who loudly maintained their sons' innocence. The programme? Er, Radio Four's *Today*!

CERTAIN sections of the media are having real trouble readjusting their natty maps and graphics to a new theatre of war.

The *Scotsman* in particular seems not to have realised that our boys have been sent to Clobba Slobba this time, not the usual target of Saddam Hussein. On the sixth day of the Nato air campaign, the paper told its readers that planes "would now attack any military presence discovered below the 44th parallel, in an attempt to protect the Kurds".

'Square Eyes'

you cannot be serious ...
IF YOU EXPECT US TO BELIEVE THAT THIS PROGRAMME IS MEANT TO BE INFORMATIVE ...
WHEN IT'S JUST AN EXCUSE TO SHOW CHEAP CLIPS
Ken Pyne

Plugged In

There must have been some knob-twiddling in Sky-tuned households on Thursday when amazing Wonderbra model Adriana Sklenarikova hove into view at the British Fashion Awards...

It wasn't just that she's 6ft 4ins and stunning — it was more the sight of her most extraordinary pair of set-top decoders... With no visible means of support they hovered in midair, perky as you please, like a couple of satellites bouncing movies around the globe.

VIVIENNE PARRY
News of the World

An occasional column devoted to cross-media plugs masquerading as news.

IT's amazing what you can learn on the internet, says the BBC's new education campaign. Shame, then, the corporation is so selective about who on its staff can log on.

Many BBC journalists, for example, still do not have access to the internet or email on their BBC computers. Due to the cost, the Beeb is very picky about who gets access, and disgruntled hacks complain that secretaries and engineers are getting priority.

For the hacks the final insult came when their own personnel department asked them to communicate with it... via the email service they still don't have.

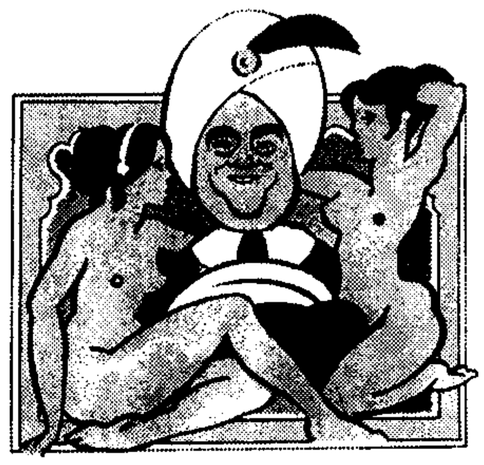
AS the last *Eye* recorded, Patrick McCreanor — whose fly-on-the-wall documentary *Cumbrian Tales* was dropped by BBC2 because it focused too much on Paddy's Bar in Ireby (publican: one P. McCreanor) — has returned to the Beeb as executive producer of *Fred Dibnah's Industrial Age*.

But viewers in the Tyne Tees ITV region have been treated to a double dose of Paddy in recent weeks: their Tuesday evenings have featured a docusoap called, er, *Cumbrian Tales*. "We are aware of the circumstances surrounding the programme," a Tyne Tees spokeswoman tells the *Eye*, "but the version we are broadcasting is different and considerably shorter. There are only six programmes, and they last only 25 minutes because of adverts." But not, presumably, adverts for Paddy's Bar.

COUCH potatoes who recall the ineptitude of Merseyside police in BBC2's recent *Mersey Blues* fly-on-the-wall series will not be surprised that another of their number is in trouble.

Inspector Jon Duffy, who appeared in the series, is now due to appear before chief constable Norman Bettison for allegedly downloading pornographic pictures on to a police computer from the internet, as is a colleague, Sergeant Martin Saxon.

The alleged offences came to light during investigations into bent copper Elmore Davies — now doing time for corruption — whose arrest in the last episode of *Mersey Blues* did much to enliven a series in which other arrests were few and far between.



TALES FROM THE ARABIAN NIGHTS

WHEN it comes to sycophancy, even *Hello!* can scarcely compete with the April issue of *Professional Security* magazine, which carries a three-page hymn of praise to Mohamed Fayed and his security chief John Macnamara.

The author, one Una Riley, was dazzled by her fact-finding tour of Harrods. "Above all," she drools, "it was clear that the owner enjoys the unreserved and genuine loyalty of his staff." Except, presumably, the many staff who have won pay-outs from industrial tribunals because of the owner's cavalier attitude to the niceties of employment law.

More comical still is Riley's assurance that "Harrods practice an equal opportunities environment" — which may come as a surprise to all the "Pakis" and "black bastards" who have been summarily dismissed at Fayed's whim.

But Riley's greatest praise is reserved for Macnamara, the former police officer who has been in charge of Fayed's security for the past decade. "What became abundantly evident," she concludes, "was that in common with the rest of the organisation, the security department is run with the utmost integrity and transparency."

By some oversight, she forgets to add that Macnamara was excluded from a security-industry conference hosted by the National Criminal Intelligence Service last year because he and his much-loved boss were under investigation by Scotland Yard at the time. Nor does she find space for other examples of his "integrity" — breaking into customers' safe deposit boxes, tapping phones, falsifying evidence, spying on staff and ruthlessly intimidating anyone who falls foul of the Phoney Pharaoh.

Take the case of Hermina da Silva, who was sacked in 1994 after rebuffing Fayed's sexual advances. When da Silva threatened to sue for wrongful dismissal, Macnamara promptly called the local police and had her arrested on bogus theft charges. She later collected £12,000 in compensation. A year later another ex-employee, Sandra Lewis-Glass, was arrested at Macnamara's behest and held at West End Central police station overnight on suspicion of stealing and taking bribes. Needless to say, the allegations again turned out to be false, and in August 1996 Fayed was ordered by an industrial tribunal to pay her £13,500.

Una Riley also fails to mention that Paul Handley-Greaves, the notorious head of Fayed's personal protection team (see *Eyes passim*), left Harrods last month for reasons that remain unclear. Rumour has it that he was given a £50,000 pay-off and allowed to keep his flash BMW; but no doubt this generosity is entirely unrelated to Fayed's wish to make sure that Handley-Greaves keeps quiet about the dirty-tricks operations he conducted for his boss.

Riley's ludicrous eulogy to Macnamara has already prompted several complaints from readers of *Professional Security*, who accuse her of "using a trade magazine as a platform to publish crap about a man who is regarded within the security industry as morally bankrupt". Still, it's safe to assume that Fayed is grateful for the puffery. In her day-job, Riley is managing director of Euro Alarms, a security installation company. Can a lucrative contract with Harrods be far behind?

● THE phoney pharoah seems to have an obsession with the roof of Harrods.

First he launched fireworks from it to mark the store's 150th anniversary; then he sought planning permission to land helicopters there; now he thinks it would make an ideal party venue for showbiz friends. A rooftop bar and restaurant are planned, with an enormous terrace running the length of the store providing space for bashes until 2.30am.

Locals are even less keen on this than they were on Fayed's chopper, and Kensington & Chelsea councillor Nicholas Paget-Brown is lobbying against. For the time being the council has told Fayed to fugg off and come back with more detailed plans.

Presumably this would apply equally to the pharoah's other scheme, outlined to hacks recently, to have himself mummified and put in a glass shrine on the Harrods' roof. Locals were apparently quite keen on this... until they realised Fayed expected embalmers to wait until he was dead.

MUSIC & MUSICIANS

OPERA directors are becoming obsessively picky in their choice of singers for their precious productions.

They don't want fat divas any more. And they certainly don't want them if they stipulate, as has been known, that they won't ascend or descend stairs. However, the arrival of cinema directors in opera has taken choosiness to bizarre new heights.

Peter Greenaway, for one, has started directing and writing operas. Not the music, but the libretti. His first, *Rosa, a horse drama*, featured among many other things a scene in which the soprano had to be stuffed into a horse's carcass and "fucked in the horse" (sic). The singers were a little surprised to find on close inspection that the fake horse carcass in question had been made, at Greenaway's request, "anatomically correct". This begged the question of how much the director was going do demand of his performers...

One of his more recent creations, a piece about the (yawn) millennium, featured Adam and Eve and required the part of Adam to be sung by a baritone who was prepared to perform naked. One candidate, the British singer Quentin Hayes, was working in Germany when he was summoned to a meeting with Greenaway in London. Hayes dutifully flew at his own expense to the meeting and all was going swimmingly until the issue of nudity arose.

"Are you circumcised?" asked Greenaway.

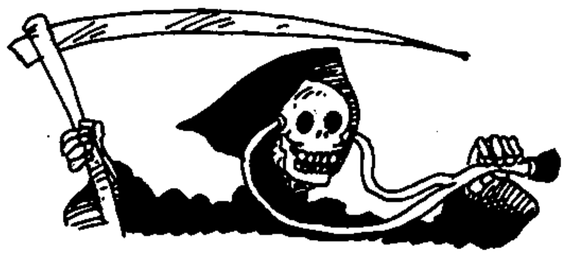
"Er, well, since you ask," replied the blushing baritone, "I am."

"Oh dear, well then I'm afraid your journey has been wasted. As I'm sure you can appreciate, we can't possibly have a circumcised Adam, can we?"

And so Hayes returned to Germany, several hundred pounds out of pocket and without a new role to sing. The project collapsed shortly afterwards and was remodelled to be performed... without singers.

IT'S GRIM UP NORTH LONDON — KNIFE & PACKER

THE NEW NEIGHBOURS HAVE MADE MY LIFE A LIVING HELL, JEZ
WHAT'S THE PROBLEM? ARE THEY LOUD? DIRTY? THREATENING?
OH GOD NO, IT'S FAR WORSE — THEY DON'T WORK IN THE MEDIA!
I FEEL A LITTLE QUEASY



DOING THE ROUNDS

SANDRA SIMKIN, of the Campaign Against Hysterectomy and Unnecessary Operations on Women (CAHUOW), has little sympathy for the 350 trainee obstetricians and gynaecologists who are facing redundancy rather than a consultant job (*Eye* 972).

"It is interesting that you cite perinatal and neonatal deaths as a reason to create more consultant jobs and provide work for these doctors," she says. "The statutory duty for maternity care lies with midwives, not obstetricians, and the crisis surrounding maternity services is not about the supply of obstetricians but the lack of midwives. Ever since the management of maternity services was grabbed by obstetricians there has been a measurable falling off in the service to mothers and a massive increase in obstetric intervention including drugs, episiotomies and caesarean sections.

"The over-supply of gynaecologists/obstetricians has allowed thousands of unnecessary hysterectomies to coexist with a caesarean section rate which is more than a third in excess of the World Health Organisation standard... If unnecessary surgery on women was stopped now, all pretension of a staffing crisis would be stopped now."

Mrs Simkin acknowledges the need for emergency obstetric service and indeed most of the studies of preventable death in and around childbirth call for both more senior midwives and obstetricians to supervise junior staff. However, even obstetricians admit that high tech medical involvement can result in over-use of the scalpel. Continuous electronic (CTG) monitoring of uterine contractions and the baby's heart rate is routinely used for low-risk deliveries and yet trials repeatedly find little benefit for these women and an increased risk of surgery.

As consultant Donald Gibb from London's King's Hospital puts it: "Electronic monitoring has certainly led to an increase in caesarean sections... In every hospital where you start doing it, you immediately put up the caesarean section rate."

In the past 30 years caesarean sections in the UK have risen from 5 percent to 17 percent of births and in some areas the rate is much higher (28 percent in Bromsgrove) with female doctors leading the charge. One study found that 31 percent of London's female obstetricians would routinely opt for the operation, mainly because they wished to avoid damage to the vagina, anus and pelvic floor muscles. This despite the fact that a planned caesarean section is three times as life-threatening to the mother as a normal birth (although the risks are still low), and complications include adhesions, intestinal obstruction, bladder injury and possible uterine rupture next time around. These risks obviously vary with the experience and skill of the surgical team.

Some hospitals have labour wards staffed entirely by midwives (the Liverpool Women's Hospital) and the "intervention rate" in such units is lower and resources are saved (caesareans cost, on average, £760). However, smaller maternity units are having to fight for survival. When the unit at Ashford in Middlesex closed in 1996, the local caesarean rate rose and the same fate may befall the women of Suffolk if the Gilchrist unit closes. It currently has a stay of execution until August.

In 1995 a survey by the National Childbirth Trust found that 99 percent of women surveyed said their local small unit provided nicer, more personalised care for low risk women. And their record on supporting breast feeding is particularly strong. As for very low-tech home-births, less than 2 percent of all deliveries, a study by the NHS Centre for Reviews and Dissemination concluded: "There is no evidence that hospital births are safer for all women and all babies, as long as there are no serious complications during pregnancy."

Mrs Simkin's final charge "that more obstetricians means more hysterectomies" also has a ring of truth, but the problem of heavy periods (menorrhagia) starts with inadequate medical treatment. Many women are still given norethisterone, a drug which is no better in the longterm than a placebo. When it doesn't work, the women are referred for surgery which they might have avoided if they had had an effective drug first (tranexamic or mefenamic acid). As for the surgery itself, you're 15 times more likely to have a hysterectomy if you've got no secondary education.

As a (male) gynaecologist wrote in the *British Medical Journal* "removing the wombs of low income women is often more efficient than taking the time to educate them and treat them medically". There is, however, one group of upper middle class patients where hysterectomies are also common. The wives of gynaecologists.

M.D.

QUOTE OF THE WEEK

"You go to your GP, who refers you to an accountant... er, consultant..."

Heard on news, Radio 4

DOWN ON THE FARM

NOT exactly a bundle of laughs being a livestock farmer these days, thanks to the ever-spreading tentacles of mad officialdom.

After Cumbrian dairy farmer Jim Webster's wife Brenda had recently totted up the accounts for the worst year in farming memory, she was triumphantly able to tell her husband their net income for 1998 had been £564.

One expense, on the orders of their MAFF hygiene inspector (£90 a visit), had been laying out £1,200 on sawdust to spread on the dairy floors. Jim was surprised at the need for this since at the beginning of the year microbiological tests had showed his milk scoring top grades. After laying out more than twice his farm's net income on sawdust to "improve hygiene", his counts at the year's end were the same.

When Berkshire organic beef farmer Joanna Wheatley recently called in the vet to a cow with a dead calf inside, he had to put it down. She could not thus claim £400 compensation under MAFF's over-30 month cattle destruction scheme because the animal was no longer fit for human consumption. She also had to dispose of the carcase.

In the old days a local knacker would have paid her £200 to take it away for dog food. But when she asked MAFF to name any knackers near Maidenhead, all the firms on the ministry list turned out to have closed under BSE regulations. Furthermore, she could not take the carcase to a MAFF-approved cattle incinerator since under "30-month" rules these can only incinerate cattle fit for human consumption. She would have to take it to a "pet incinerator" which charges by weight. She could transport her dead cow to Somerset or, if she preferred, to Cambridgeshire. Either way it would cost her £320.

One of many absurd regulations which flowed from the foolish Pennington report, after the 1996 Scottish E Coli outbreak, was a Meat Hygiene Service (MHS) requirement that long-haired cattle should have their bellies shaved before slaughter, for fear of contaminating the meat. Experts argued that shaving the cattle after slaughter would be far more practicable, since any farmer creeping under a lively animal fresh off the hills, to apply clippers to its tummy, would risk being kicked where it hurt.

Dr Garth Lowman of the Scottish Agricultural College has finally made public the results of this MHS rule. According to Health and Safety Executive (HSE) figures, he reported, "more than 200 Scottish farmers" alone have sustained serious injuries from being kicked, gored or trampled by resisting beasts.

Not only cattle farmers are confronted by such multiplying absurdities. A Norfolk rector, the Rev. Leslie Wilman, and his wife keep goats. He recently reported in his parish news how they used to take surplus male kids down for slaughter by the local butcher when he had a quiet moment. Eventually EU rules put a stop to this, but at least they then found a friendly local abattoir prepared to oblige.

On arriving with a couple of kids the other morning, however, they were met by the abattoir's not-so-friendly MHS Spanish vet, who said this was not permitted. The slaughterhouse's current licence did not specify the killing of goats (in EU-speak, "caprines"). When it was pointed out that this must be an oversight, since the abattoir had been dealing with goats and kids for 30 years, the vet advised them to contact another MHS official in Cambridge, one Miguel Barona. This grave and reverend senor instructed them to contact MAFF's Norfolk office. The rector had to explain it closed five years ago.

'Even Newer Muckspreader'

Down On The Fish Farm

On February, Donald "Duck" Dewar, the Scottish secretary, "called in" applications by fish farmers to use the highly toxic chemical ivermectin to treat rampant sea-lice infestations in their marine cages.

This is the first time the Scottish secretary has called in any of the constant stream of applications from the industry successfully requesting legal permission to pollute the marine environment.

But even as Dewar deliberates, a £700,000 grant has been awarded to the government's Dunstaffnage Marine Laboratory near Oban to investigate the "after-effect" of the use of fish farm chemicals on the marine habitat. The lab has confirmed that this will include an assessment of the impact of ivermectin. A cynic might be forgiven for concluding that the decision to grant permission for the use of this chemical has already been taken.

It would have been difficult for the Scottish office (SO) to promulgate this cash-bonanza to help its salmon farming chums. Hydro Seafood GSP, the Norwegian-owned company that is Scotland's largest farm salmon producer, is suing the SO for upwards of £10m for losses sustained because of the disease, infectious salmon anaemia (ISA) — a disease which Hydro Seafood GSP itself allegedly introduced to Scottish waters (*Eye* 971)

What to do? A chat with its English colleagues resolved the problem. The research grant has been awarded not by the SO but by MAFFS, the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food, acting through the National Environmental Research Council.

If Dewar is forced to set up a public inquiry into the use of ivermectin, his regulatory body, the Scottish Environment Protection Agency, would have to defend the indefensible. It is alleged that the agency has been unable to produce any evidence whatever of its competence in assessing marine cage discharges. An inquiry would also embarrass SO fishery scientists who would have to defend in public their claim that fish farm sea lice infestation was not a principal cause of the disastrous decline in West Highland wild fish stocks.

Sensing the danger a public inquiry would pose to their already tarnished reputation, and much to the satisfaction of the SO, some fish farmers are already beginning to quietly withdraw their ivermectin applications. On 22 March, Black Isle Fish Farms near Inverness did so.

On 23 March three other fish farmers followed suit: Seaboard Marine Ltd, Marine Harvest McConnell and Finfish Ltd. G.C. Melville of the SO determinations team told objectors: "I refer to the above applications which the Secretary of State called in on 9th February 1999. These applications have since been withdrawn and I can confirm that the Department intends to take no further action on these applications." Bye bye public inquiry.

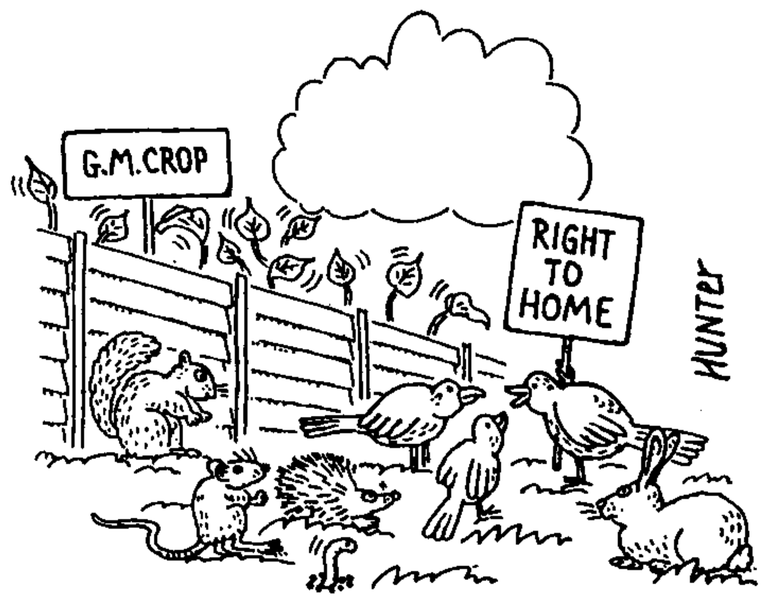
With one bound the fish farmers and their SO pals again seem to be off the hook.

'Old Trout'

QUOTE OF THE WEEK

"I can proudly say that on my farm, that employs not only all my family, but also four outside workers, there are no badgers, no rabbits, no mice, no snakes, no lizards, no rodents, and if I could stop the birds from flying over I would. My farm produces food, not fluffy little animals. I am a farmer, not a zoo keeper!"

— Letter to the *North Devon Journal* from C. Roberts, Black Torrington.



SIGNAL FAILURES

THERE will be something rather crucial missing in the forthcoming criminal trial following the Southall rail disaster: namely, a defendant.

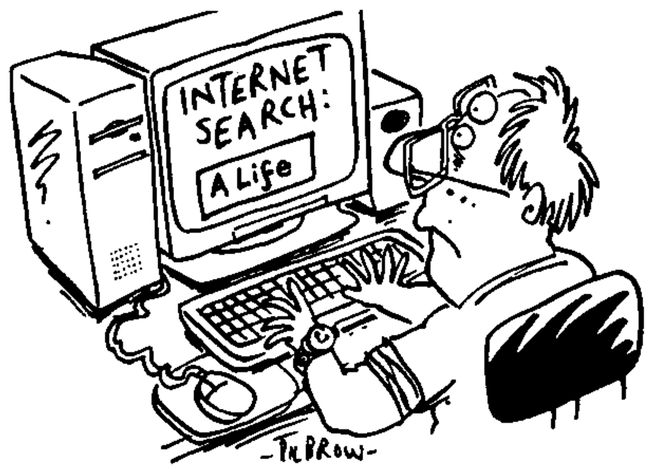
Train driver Larry Harrison will be sitting in the dock running the risk of several years in prison. But his co-defendant, Great Western Trains, won't be in the dock and no one there runs any risk at all.

The crown prosecution service (CPS) has come up with a brilliant wheeze to avoid last year's fiasco over the Watford train crash. The train driver in that case was quickly acquitted after his lawyers had made some caustic comments about the CPS's failure to prosecute Railtrack or any of the train companies involved.

So this time at Southall the CPS is prosecuting Great Western Trains as well. Though the company is a defendant, however, none of its directors is named. No one sits in the dock and no one will go to prison if the firm is convicted.

This is tremendous news for the Great Western trains chairman at the time of the disaster, Maurice Warren. Poor Mr Warren suffered terribly after the crash. Only a few months after it happened, Great Western Trains was snapped up by the huge transport combine First Group. Mr Warren's modest shareholding, which cost him £10,000, was sold for £1.5m. Chief executive Brian Scott was punished even more severely. His shareholding, which cost him £38,000, was sold for £5m. All the other directors shared in the spoils too.

Richard George scooped up £3m; Mike Carroll, Ian Cusworth and John Sellers £2m. Ann Robinson, former director of the Institute of Directors who is now in charge at the National Association of Pension Funds, turned her small shareholding into a glorious three quarters of a million quid. Altogether, the cost of paying the Great Western directors for their shareholding was £16m.



WHAT A TRUCK UP!

PROTESTING road hauliers do not simply want the government to reduce their fuel and road tax costs. They are also seeking public sympathy for truckers who face redundancy, especially those in small haulage firms.

This is gloriously ironic coming from an industry that could not have shown *less* regard for the livelihoods and causes of others over the past few decades.

The truckers also want taxpayers to continue subs idising the over-supply of lorries in Britain and paying to repair all the damage they cause (see last *Eye*). The damage is not just to our roads but to small businesses across the country too. Too many truckers pursuing too few contracts has also intensified pressure on haulage prices and increased the temptation to cut corners with safety.

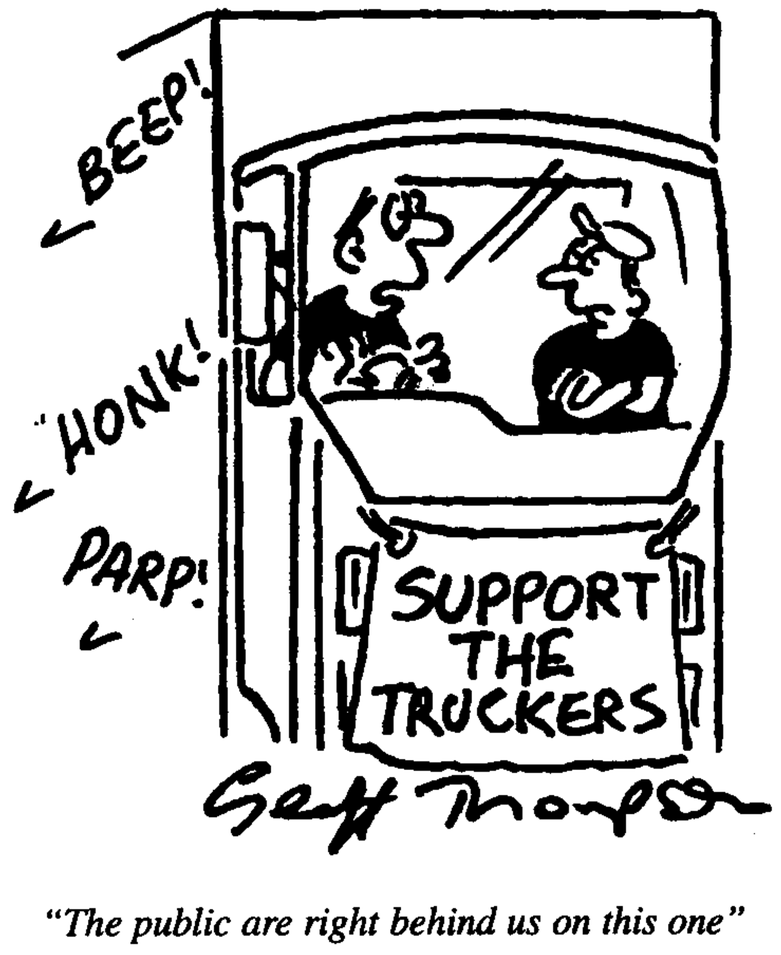
In 1997-98 in roadside spot-checks 19.6 percent of all heavy goods vehicles stopped were so dangerous — because of serious braking, overloading, steering or other faults — they were immediately banned from continuing their journeys. In 1995-96 18.2 percent were ordered off the road. Even when they were not taken by surprise, hauliers failed to get 38.8 percent of their HGVs through an MoT at the first attempt (34.9 percent in 1995-96).

Parliament has been told it is more common for lorries to break the speed limit on A roads than to comply with it, and statistics show that HGVs are more than twice as likely as cars to be involved in fatal accidents.

Breaking rules brings financial gains, however, and European railways estimate that if road laws were strictly enforced 20 percent of the road hauliers' business could switch to the rails. Add to all this the taxpayers' large hidden subsidy — up to £2.5bn a year according to one recent study — and it can be argued that the costs of freight transport are artificially low.

This favours big companies like superstores, which rely on cheap distribution from huge central depots. A corner shop may stock eggs from a local farm, but the nearby Tesco or Sainsbury's can sell eggs cheaper even if they have travelled hundreds of miles from a mass-production point. Over the years food processing (at bakeries, breweries and dairies) and other manufacturing activities have, like retail, been reshaped around plentiful, cheap distribution. This trend has fuelled the expansion of big, centralised businesses (and the growth of lorry traffic) at the expense of smaller, localised producers.

This can mean centralisation within Europe as well as the UK. Textile workers in Britain have lost out to eastern European sweatshops, partly because cross-continental transport is so cheap. Intense competition from overseas — often in a marketplace



"The public are right behind us on this one"

distorted by subsidies or lax welfare rules — has long been a fact of life for many people, but the truckers now expect the public to throw up its hands in horror because they are facing foreign competition for the first time.

An inestimable number of small businesses have been crushed by the spread of big business. Many hauliers may not have realised the role they played in this but their industry cannot plead ignorance of the jobs and causes it has undermined by deliberate actions — such as crossing picket lines and setting up its own.

In the early 1970s truckers blocked a rail depot in Didcot with the result that British Rail lost a contract for shipping cars. Truckers never gave a toss for the jobs of rail workers. In the 1980s those rail workers who still had their jobs agreed not to convey coal in support of striking miners. But there was no shortage of road hauliers willing to keep the power stations running. Thousands of miners were soon on the dole.

The haulage industry has always chosen to side with the right-wing champions of open competition — the kind of open competition in which road hauliers cover between 49 and 68 percent of their full costs (according to a royal commission in 1994) and leave the public to pay for the rest.

'Dr B. Ching'

● *See Letters page*

NOOKS and CORNERS

THERE is one extraordinary omission in the list of nominations for world heritage sites in Britain proposed to Unesco by our own Chris Smith, secretary of state for culture 'n' fun. This is of course the Millennium Dome at Greenwich — a wonder of the world by any standards, not least because so many politicians are prepared to spend billions of pounds erecting so pointless and temporary a structure.

Otherwise, I must say, Chris Smith's list of nominations is surprisingly intelligent. Not cathedrals and castles this time — old Labour sort of "heritage" — but mills and dockyards and some chunks of God's Wonderful Railway from Paddington to Bristol designed by the great I.K. Brunel. And quite right too: this column has always admired the sublime beauty of industrial buildings and the pioneering monuments of the industrial revolution in Britain are of global significance.

One nomination is the complex of grim, multi-storey cotton mills in Ancoats in Manchester dating from the 1790s, which had more impact on Europe than any smart country house of the same date. The great Schinkel of Berlin came and drew them and was both fascinated and appalled by what he saw.

But there is one real dud on this world heritage list: Down House in Kent. This is a dull, undistinguished and generally unremarkable mansion on the edge of the village of Downe — even more boring, in fact, than Churchill's awful Chartwell nearby. So why is this house proposed for the world heritage status that has so far eluded, say, Salisbury Cathedral or Blenheim Palace? Answer: because it was once lived in by Charles Darwin.

Never mind that Darwin had no impact on the house and left practically nothing behind there; never mind that, despite the most strenuous efforts of English Heritage to Laura Ashley it up and interpret it to death, the interior remains extraordinarily uninteresting, not to say empty.

Such is the homage to the author of The Origin of Species in the process of making him a secular saint — a process explained by the current fashionability of neo-Darwinian ideas which has also enabled the egregious Richard Dawkins to posture as a great sage and appear constantly on television. Is the contribution of Darwin to world culture and human happiness really more important than that of Joseph Lister, say, or Michael Faraday — to think only of the 19th century?

AT LEAST the world heritage list is rather more intelligent than the "new" Labourish decision by the Royal Institute of British Architects to award this year's royal gold medal not to an individual architect or even a writer, but to a city — Barcelona.

Presumably RIBA had run out of ideas as well as cronies to give gongs to now that Richard and Norman and Michael have all got theirs. It will be Bilbao next, just you wait and see. Why not Neasden, I say: after all, it can now boast the finest new Hindu temple in the world, with far better craftmanship than you will ever find on a building by Richard or Norman.

IN Eye 963 I implied that the new director of the Ashmolean Museum in Oxford, Christopher Brown (or White, or Black?), was somehow a good thing by being an improvement on his eponymous predecessor, Christopher White (or Black, or Brown). This was because he undid the most ludicrous aspect of the spoiling of the museum by those modish exhibition designers, Stanton Williams, by reopening the Ionic portico, so that visitors were no longer obliged to enter the museum through the shop. What, after all, is the point of a great classical portico if not to say "entrance"?

I now realise that I was completely wrong. I am now sorry to have to report that Professor Brown is not a good thing at all, for he now wants to spoil the portico by installing banners between the columns as a permanent feature. Has he not noticed, has no one told him, that the Ashmolean Museum, designed by C.R. Cockerell, is one of the most distinguished and subtle classical buildings in Britain, a brilliant examplar of how scholarship and precedent can be made alive and sparkling?

Other galleries have banners (even if only temporary ones), so he wants them too. And of course he comes up with the tired old argument that visitors do not realise what the Ashmolean is. Really? Amazing that for a century and a half so many of them have managed to get in. Perhaps, instead of disfiguring the architecture, this whizzy new director might consider putting up a notice on the front wall. But that would be too old-fashioned.

'Piloti'

ROTTEN BOROUGHS

GIDEON BIBLE

THE Blairite hit squad (aka "taskforce") sent by Labour's national executive committee (NEC) to clean up Liverpool Labour party achieved considerable success last month when Gideon Ben-Tovim ousted old Labourite boss Frank Prendergast as leader of the city's Labour group. The move followed last May's disaster when Labour lost the city to the Lib Dems.

Prendergast enjoyed the majority support of Labour councillors, which is why the taskforce ordered a ballot of the entire local party membership. The rough and ready Prendergast proved no match for smooth ex-communist university lecturer Ben-Tovim, who won by a two-to-one margin.

Prendergast's approach to the campaign did him no favours. A glossy leaflet quoting private correspondence from various local worthies concerning what a good job he'd done when council leader was disowned by many of the worthies themselves. The spectacle of prominent Prendergast supporter, former deputy leader Marie McGiveron, screaming like a fishwife during the hustings meeting convinced many waverers to go for Ben-Tovim. And the fact that Prendergast was backed by pro-Serb MP Robert "Slobabob" Wareing didn't help.

Something of a Blairite beauty pageant was dragged out to support Ben-Tokenism, including MPs Maria Eagle and Jane Kennedy. One curiously off-message local MP was junior minister Peter Kilfoyle, whose letter in support of Prendergast, written on Commons note paper, labelled the opposite camp as "a group of self-serving people who wished to undermine your leadership for purely selfish reasons".

Kilfoyle is known as "The Cleaner" after a *Pulp Fiction* character who specialises in sorting out the mess following bloody underworld assassinations. In this case, however, it seems the cleaner went to the wrong apartment.

● **GADDESDEN ROW junior school, featured in *Eye* 970, is to stay open. Education secretary David Blunkett has overruled Labour-controlled Hertfordshire county council, which wanted to close the rural school, one of the smallest in the county, against the wishes of parents, staff and local Labour MP Tony McWalter.**

A spokesman for the parents said they "couldn't thank the *Eye* enough" for highlighting the case. Attention now turns to the strange campaign of disinformation waged by the council in its efforts to have the school closed. Jim Dalton, head of education planning, has been reported to the ombudsman over allegedly misleading statements he made about Herts schools' Ofsted records in a local radio interview.

BRIGHTON PEER

LORD "Steve" Bassam has come a long way since his days as a spartist squatters' leader in Brighton, where he now leads the council (*Eye* 958).

He was a prime mover last year behind a plan for a consortium to jointly run the revenues and benefits services of Brighton & Hove and three neighbouring district councils (Lewes, Tandridge and Wealden). Central to the project was a joint call centre, which would require a "small amount" of private sector funding for the provision of IT services.

On the joint board overseeing the project were Lord B, who is a consultant to KPMG (see *Eye* 966) and a former consultant for local authority service providers Capita, Steve Rayson (director of finance at Brighton & Hove and former KPMG employee) and Bill Lovell (director of finance at Wealden and consultant for Academy Information systems, a Capita subsidiary). Lord Bassam resigned from the board last year and from Capita in February.

Last month submissions were heard from companies chasing the "small" IT contract. After presentations it was decided to outsource the *whole* revenues and benefits call centre to a new company, 49 percent of which was to be owned by the four councils and 51 per cent by... Capita!

MUDIE BLUES

RED FACES in Leeds where suspensions, resignations and investigations are the order of the day at council-backed training outfit CHEL.

Chapeltown and Harehills Enterprises Ltd, set up to train jobless people, managed to mislay £150,000 of taxpayers' money and appears to have been paid further thousands for work which was never carried out.

CHEL chairman is Labour city councillor John Clare, who is the protégé (and neighbour) of Leeds East MP George Mudie. CHEL was set up during Mudie's reign as leader of Leeds council in the 1980s; today he is Mr Tony's minister for lifelong learning (ha!) but remains an influential figure in Leeds. He recently made local headlines by claiming that too many jobs in the self-styled "boom city" were going to outside commuters. A bit rich from a man who moved to Leeds from Dundee.

Clare is certain to be reelected as Harehills' councillor in next month's local elections, but he nearly didn't make it. His deselection in favour of a local Asian candidate was widely predicted until the Harehills Labour party was suspended last year — under the little-known party rule that thou shalt not hold annual general meetings during Ramadan. In the absence of a local party, regional officials reselected Clare. It was not a difficult choice, as he was chosen from a shortlist of one.

SHAME ABOUT SURREY

SURREY county council, proposing to spend £100m over the next 25 years on its household waste disposal service — the council's biggest-ever contract — has spent the last few months whittling down a list of 20 interested firms to a shortlist of two — SITA (GB) Ltd and Onyx Aurora Ltd (*Eyes passim*).

At the end of March the Environment Agency produced its first "hall of shame" listing businesses "who have been found guilty during 1998 of offences against the environment". Top of the list was ICI; number two was Tyseley Waste Disposal Ltd, a subsidiary of Onyx; third was London Waste Ltd, a subsidiary of, er, SITA.

Tyseley was fined a total of £95,000 for "failing to properly manage the removal and dispersal of two radioactive sources" (ie losing them). London Waste was fined £38,500 plus £14,705 costs for unauthorised burning of chemical waste.

● **IN *EYE* 973 we said the site for the 2002 Manchester commonwealth games was at Dumplington. The Dumplington site, owned by Peel Holdings, now home to the Trafford Centre shopping mall, was in fact the proposed site for Manchester's failed 2000 Olympics bid; the site for the Commonwealth Games, old mineshaft, former gasworks pollution and all, is at Eastlands.**

Letters

Private Eye

Lose some...

Sir,

Your front cover of issue 973, dated 3 April 1999, has led me to cancel my order for PE.

War at the sharp end has never been funny. Quite a few people in this country know this.

Perhaps you have never been called upon to find out for yourselves. Like me I expect you can think of several reasons why you haven't.

ROBERT BLAKE,

Stockport, Cheshire.

... win some

Sir,

Your "Winstony Blair" cover did not make me laugh. It was simply not funny. It was brilliant. Keep up the good work.

MICHELLE MATTHEWS,

Via email.

More on Morgan

Sir,

I did not threaten the Guardian's Nick "Filth" Davies with the words: "I'll do your chin" at the British Press Awards. I actually warned him: "If you don't shut up I'll smack you with one of your sandals."

Yours moronically,
PIERS MORGAN,

Editor, The Mirror.

Lookalike

Blonde woman

Blonde woman

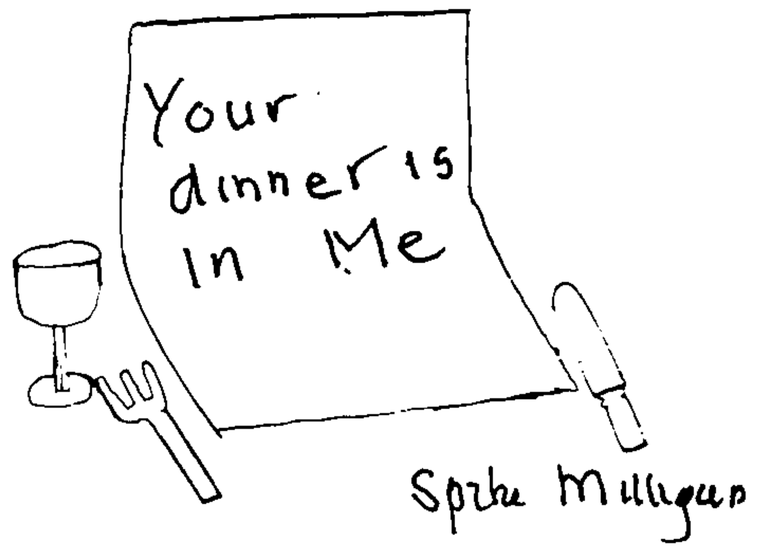
Sir,

Have any of your readers noticed the uncanny resemblance between the two blonde women who recently won prizes for their work in the cinema?

One played Elizabeth and the other didn't... Or did she?

Yours,
BARRY NORMAL,

London W1.



with thanks to Barry Fantoni

Laughing stock

Sir,

If the government subsidises the haulage industry, why can only Eddie (Cursed of God) Stobart make any money? Is it because a range of crap toys and a fan club of wankers are more lucrative than actually keeping the country fed? As for freight by rail, if it's so efficient, do you think putting rolling stock on trucks to send it for repair a bad joke or a sad comment on track access charges?

Yours,
A FAT ANGRY TRUCKER (Or something that rhymes with it),

Via email.

On the wrong track

Sir,

The hauliers demonstrating in Park Lane were not complaining about competition from the railways (Eye 973). As transport professionals, they know that even if rail freight were to double in volume it would take less than 10 percent of freight traffic off the roads. Most freight movements performed by truck could never be undertaken by train, ships or pipelines. What they were complaining about is that Britain's hauliers face the highest road tax (£5,750 a year) and the highest fuel duties in Europe yet have to pay further tolls and taxes when their trucks are travelling elsewhere in Europe.

In contrast, hauliers from the rest of the EU can come to Britain and undertake domestic and international work here without paying any British road tax at all. Arriving at the ports with their tanks full of cheap diesel, they can work for a week without contributing anything to the exchequer. In some cases their annual road tax is less than a tenth of what a British-registered truck must pay.

Thanks to massive government subsidies, rail freight is managing to gain some business after years of decline. But to whose advantage?

One of the reasons passenger rail services are in such a bad state is that express passenger trains are being delayed by slow, unreliable freight movements which can now demand track access at times to suit them rather than being slotted in between other services.

That's something for your readers to think about while they are waiting for the (delayed) 17.50, and watching a long string of empty and rusting wagons being shunted past the platform by a shagged-out diesel locomotive.

In closing, here's an honest question for your correspondent: trucks have to conform to a host of strict environmental regulations governing noise and pollution. What regulations concerning noise and pollution do railway trains conform to?

RICHARD SIMPSON,

Editor, Trucking International.

Derailing Dr B. Ching

Sir,

Signal Failures came off the tracks. The truck drivers clogging up Park Lane were not supported by the FTA or the RHA, the trade associations representing the interests of larger companies. The vast majority in the Trans-Action demonstration were small contractors and owner-drivers. They have faced rate stagnation and even cuts for years despite rising costs, reducing return on capital, inflation and cut-throat competition. Most hauliers are not fat cats.

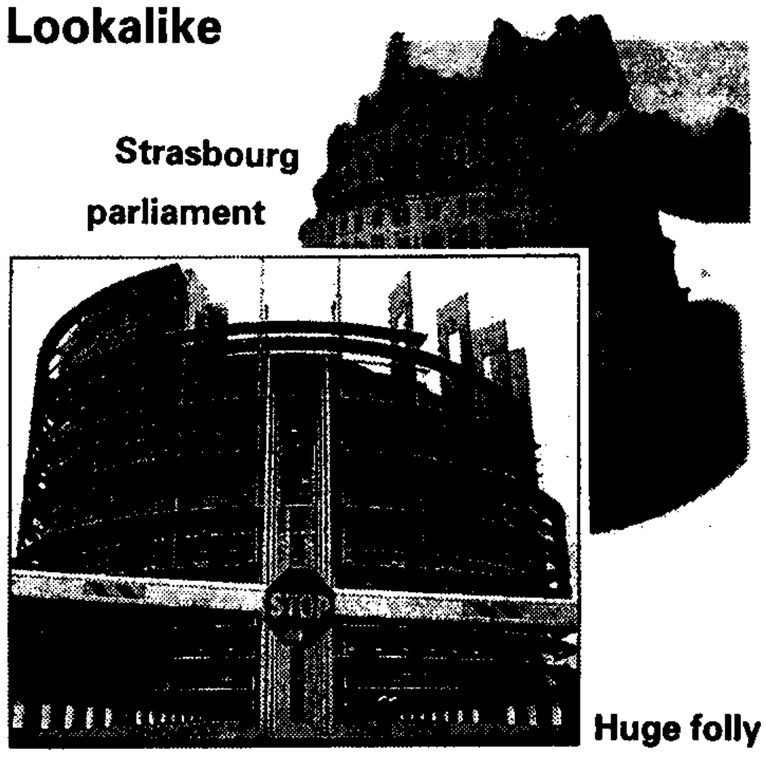
As for the tired old argument about putting most freight back on rail: longer delivery times, additional warehousing and goods in transit costs would soar as would local traffic congestion around transhipment stations. Supermarkets could empty overnight with a rail strike which might not impress all those now so keen to run down the service given by lorry drivers. Vague implications that lorry drivers are members of a criminal class overloading their vehicles and running roughshod over respect for the law are not constructive. Small hauliers do not benefit from the advantages which were implied go into their bank accounts. Instead, the general public benefits by paying less for what it buys. The real argument is about whether taxpayers and the public are willing to cough up for the real costs of consumption.

Yours sincerely,
CHARLES CAWLEY,

Gateway Logistics Recruitment, London EC1.

"Our after-dinner discussions can get a little heated"

Lookalike



Sir,

Have any of your readers noticed the uncanny similarity between the biblical Tower of Babel and the European parliament's empty new headquarters in Strasbourg? The new parliament cost £350m and will be used for a full 60 days a year — while, according to the Bible, the tower was just a huge folly.

Yours,
ARCHIE TECT.

Scotch Miss

Sir,

I do not know how you can bring yourself to refer to the Divine Sue, Queen of Today and master of her medium, as Sue MacGhastly. Shurely some mistake. Given her absolutely delightful personality and the fact that her roots must lie in the country of the Frasers and the Grants the appropriate sobriquet must be Sue MacFragrance.

Yours faithfully,
ARTHUR RAY,

Via e-mail.

Prof proof

Sir,

Alert as ever. Yes, I was appointed News International Visiting Professor in Broadcast Media at Oxford — all of 14 months ago (press release enclosed)! And I have already given the lectures — so it is a bit hard for students "now" to attend them. With more time to research the "story", you might have discovered that my modest stipend almost covered my research costs, and that the Murdoch empire also shelled out for a cocktail party for thirty people, a small commemorative silver bowl and a half-page advertisement in the Times Higher Education Supplement.

The trouble with presuming that this munificence has triggered my "reemergence in the Murdoch fold" and my early return to Isleworth is that I am merely the first of five such visiting professors — so, on your logic, we would barely get our hands on the helm before handing over to our successor each year. Given the laughable quality of your analysis, I can only sympathise with those candidates for the BBC DG job who lack the Private Eye imprimatur of standing "no chance whatever of getting the job"!

Yours faithfully,
DAVID ELSTEIN,

Chief Executive, Channel 5.

LUVVIES

I don't work for the sake of working, it has to be a love affair. Something where desire is very strong because, you know, keeping that feeling alight over a 10-week shoot is sort of like holding an orgasm for three months.

CHARLOTTE RAMPLING
The Guardian

An occasional column devoted to gems from the acting profession. £10 paid for entries.

SUPERMODELS

KERBER

YOU WON'T HAVE ANY PROBLEMS WITH YOUR WEIGHT IN FUTURE.....
MODEL CLINIC
I'VE REMOVED ALL TRACES OF FAT AND CELLULITE, STAPLED YOUR STOMACH, REMOVED 2 RIBS, AND ADDED METABOLISM-INCREASING HORMONES.
THEATRE
HERE, TAKE A LOOK..... WHAT DO YOU THINK?
WOW..... I'M ABSOLUTELY BREATHLESS!!!
THAT'S BECAUSE I REMOVED YOUR LUNGS!
THEATRE

I-SPY *Ladies' Toilet, Umtata, S. Africa*

Submitted by Catrina Popham. £10 paid for similar submissions. *(SAE required for return of photographs. No transparencies.)*

Organ recital

Sir,

I should be grateful for some evidence supporting your claim that I got my WW2 alliances muddled up (Eye, 30 March).

Otherwise, I shall have to reach the sad conclusion that you are not the organ of truth and rectitude I thought you were and place an order for an annual subscription at once.

Yours faithfully,
BEN BRADSHAW MP,
House of Commons.

Fighting talk

Sir,

I am sorry to disappoint HP Sauce (Eye 937); Serbians comprising the "Royal Yugoslav Army" under Mihailovich, did fight alongside the Germans in WWII, and no mishtake!

This prompted the allies to switch their support to the Partisans, of which there were basically two groups: Tito's forces included all nationalities (with Serbs in the minority) and Croatian partisans under Hebrang.

Fitzroy McLean led allied military mission at Tito's HQ, while Randolph Churchill and Evelyn Waugh were with the Croatians.

Waugh thought Tito was a bad chap and got his books banned in Yugoslavia.

McLean presented Tito as a good chap, and was rewarded with a state-confiscated renaissance villa in Dalmatia.

HP Sauce could find all this in the FO's own records (1941-45), unless Douglas Hurd shredded the lot.

Incidentally, it is interesting to compare the benefits one gets by supporting dictators. Whilst the late McLean got, comparatively, peanuts, la Neville-Jones and Hurd made a packet out of Milosevic. It follows that the harsher a dictator the greater the benefits.

JOHN BLAGOVIC,
London WC1.

Almond pasting

Sir,

*If the unreconstructed hacks and subs at Private Eye ever actually **read** the Daily Torygraph they would have noticed I haven't been there as defence correspondent since July, 1995; and that my successor, Tim Butcher, has been doing the job for years. That's not "a few weeks earlier" as you put it (Street of Shame, 2 Apr edition).*

*If they **had** read it they may further have seen that I have continued to write for the Telegraph, most recently on Mar 15. As far as I am concerned I have a perfectly amicable relationship with the Telegraph and, far from having "hard feelings galore" about being "sacked", would happily continue to write for them.*

As for the Daily Mail, I committed to them before the Telegraph called, and I'm not going to renege on someone I respect and have a good relationship with. Apparently Private Eye doesn't understand these things.

Yours sincerely,
PETER ALMOND,
Esher, Surrey.

Julie Madly Deeply

Sir,

Re: The age of reason (Guardian Weekend, April 10). Forty reasons not to buy the Guardian:
1. Julie Burchill writes for it.
2. Er... surely that's enough.

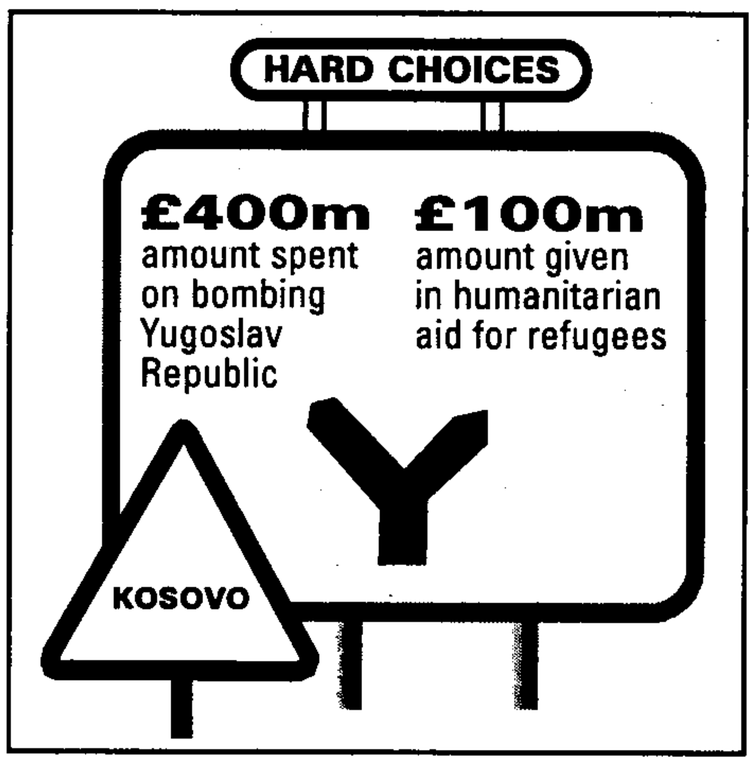
GINO DREW,
York.

O·B·N

When he turned his crinkly smile on me I was reduced to a giggling wreck. I whimpered: "My God, you really are Parky." It's that heady mix of Geoff Boycott and Richard Burton.

LAUREN BOOTH
The Times

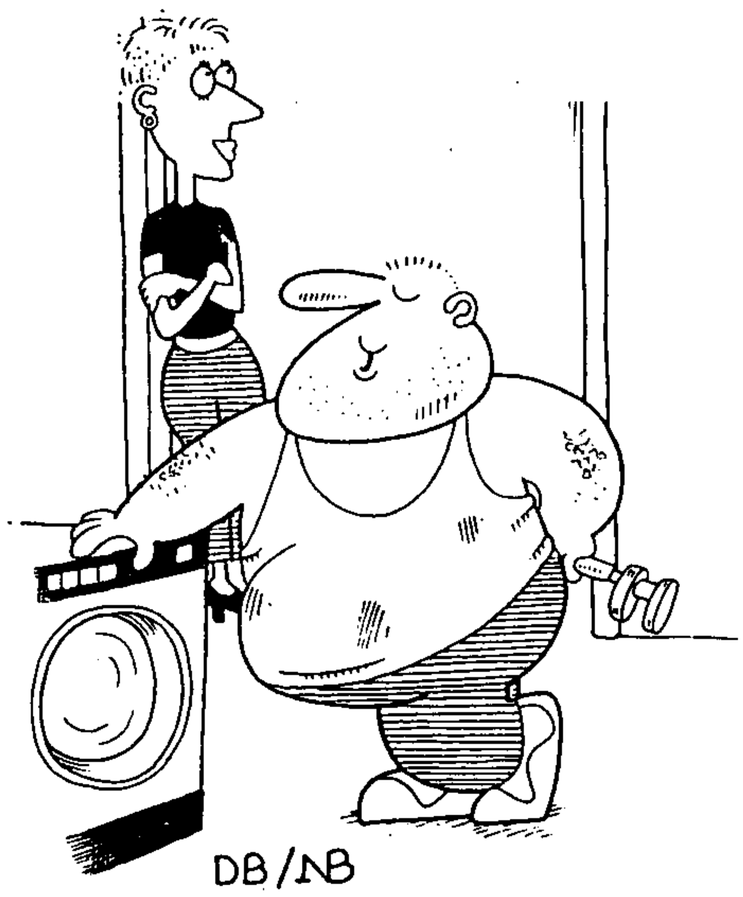
£10 paid for entries put forward for the Order of the Brown Nose.



HOM SAP

AUSTIN

NEW OLD SAYINGS



If you ain't a bloke, don't fix it

Cock and Istanbul

Sir,

How very odd that the writer of the "Letter From Istanbul" in the 19 March issue of your magazine did not notice any of the brutal bomb attacks carried out by the PKK in our city. If he had done, he might have, perhaps, understood why our authorities are sensitive and on alert concerning the extremists. It is inconceivable that — if he indeed lives in Istanbul — he is unaware of, or oblivious to, Abdullah Öcalan's (APO's) murderous gruesome activities over many years. Incidentally, he must be misinformed: the figure 30,000 is not about the so-called detainees — it is the figure which represents the innocent men, women and children including Kurds who were brutally murdered by the PKK. Your "Istanbul" correspondent is also obviously unaware that most of the Kurds in Istanbul and all over Turkey loathe and detest APO and the PKK and that many of them had voted for HADEP in the last elections. This time we shall see soon what happens: since contrary to what you write, HADEP will stand without any restrictions in the forthcoming elections on 18 April.

Yours sincerely,
ALTEMUR KILIÇ,
Columnist TURKIYE Daily Newspaper, Istanbul.

Colemanballs

£10 paid for contributions

"Hopefully, the rain will hold off for both sides."
L. DALLAGLIO
(Harvey R. Cole)

***Interviewer**: Who do you think your music appeals to?*
***Billie**: The full range. Early to late teens.*
Flipside Magazine
(Mark Fryers)

"We live in a country where children take calculators into exams, for God's sake, so no wonder they can't read or write."
JANET STREET PORTER, Radio 4
(Ralph F. Rolls)

"Is this the win that jettisons you up the table?"
JED PITMAN, HTV West
(Jeff Chalker)

"It separates the sheep from the men."
LORD PUTTNAM, ITV
(Felicity Otterson)

FUNNY OLD WORLD

COMPILED BY VICTOR LEWIS-SMITH

● **"In the name of God, I plead for leniency," Zainal Mohamed Esa told the Singapore District Court during the closing stages of his trial. "Yes, I stole the footwear, but I am not a common thief, and I did not do it out of any desire for personal profit. I am a drug addict. Shoe smell is more delightful to me even than crack cocaine, and when the desire to sniff a pair of used footwear comes over me, I am powerless to resist."**

Earlier, defence lawyer Mr Rai Ratan Kumar had told the court about the unusual addiction of Zainal, a 43-year-old lorry driver. "My client is not a thief. Rather, he has a chronic addiction to old shoes, a sort of psychological craving. At such times, he simply has to sniff a pair of worn shoes, but he only does it until the smell runs out. Then he gives them to the Salvation Army, and goes in search of fresh pairs. He usually takes shoes that have been left outside flats or hotel rooms after a hard day's use, and for the month before his arrest he had been taking pairs early each morning from Block 345 in Ang Mo Kio Avenue 3. Going back to the same location too many times. That was his undoing."

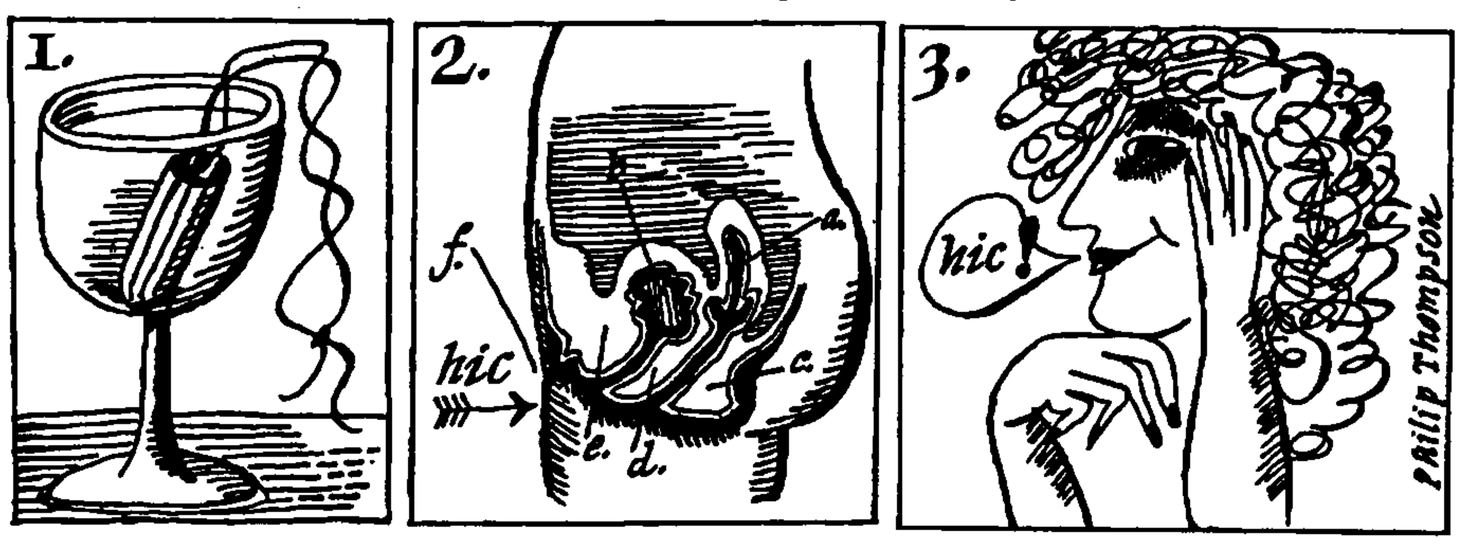
At the time of his arrest, Zainal was wheeling a trolley containing 28 pairs of old shoes, each pair wrapped in a sealed plastic bag "to lock the smell in". His daughter told reporters she had not realised that her father had a problem, although in the past she had found him several times "crouching in my wardrobe among my shoes, with a dazed look on his face".

Zainal was sentenced to 25 weeks in jail. *(Singapore Straits Times, 3/3/99. Spotter: Nigel Carey)*

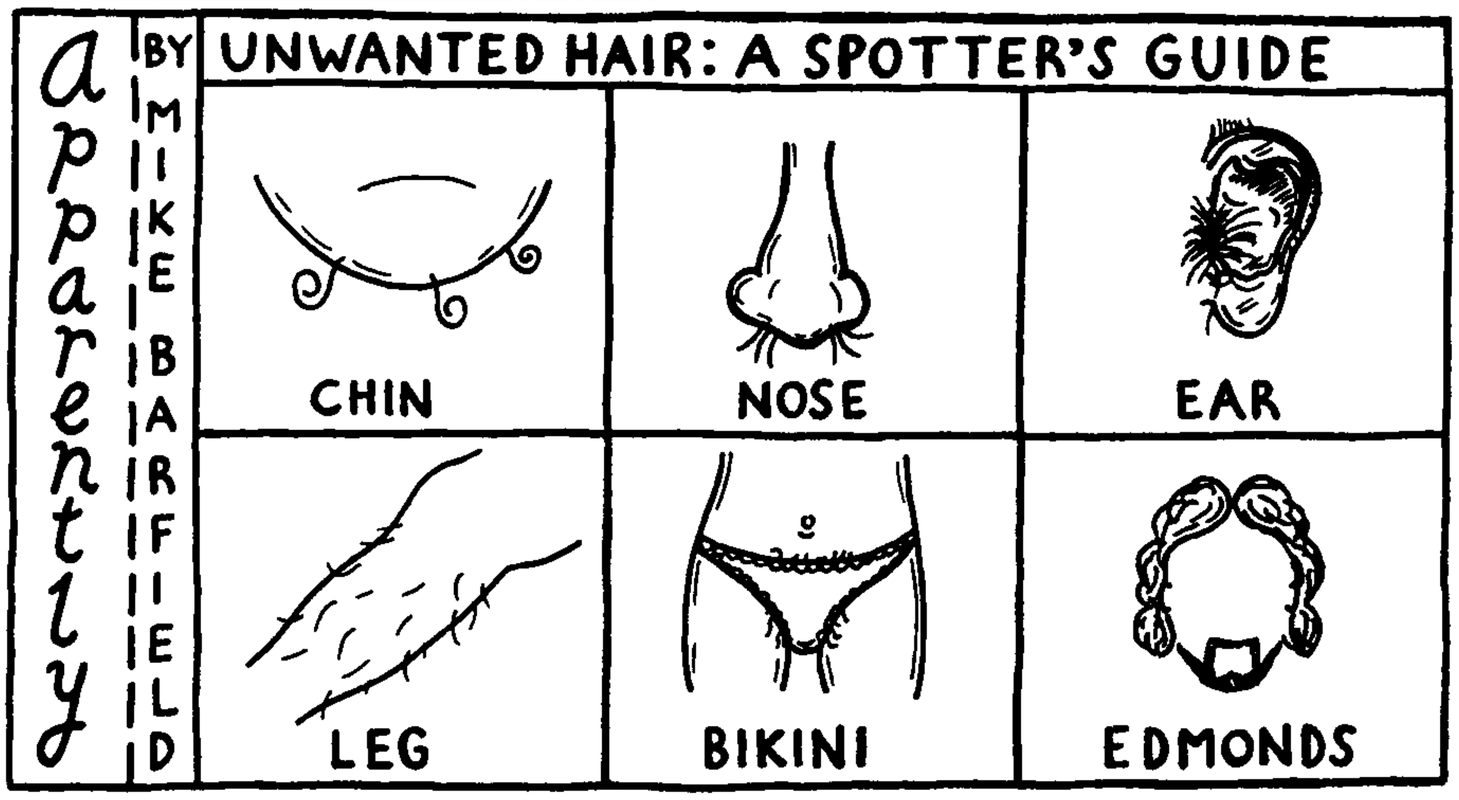
—●—

● "Cricket Tour to Pakistan: Sherborne is believed to be the first English school to tour Pakistan. The trip was a huge success both on and off the field. The team lost the first two club matches but won the remaining four games with excellent wins against Karachi Grammar School by 116 runs and Karachi Gymkhana Colts by 11 runs. Mark Shearer scored 115 not out against Karachi Grammar School, James Adams scored 307 runs, Peter Harris and Duncan Reece-Smith were the most successful bowlers.

"Footnote. Patrick Gidney, fielding on the boundary, was joined by a young Pakistani boy, who engaged him in conversation. 'Are you a Muslim?' he asked Patrick. 'No, actually I'm a Christian.' 'Oh...' said the youngster. A little later, the boy returned with some friends and started stoning Patrick!" *(Sherborne School Review, Spring 1999. Spotter "Old Boy")*

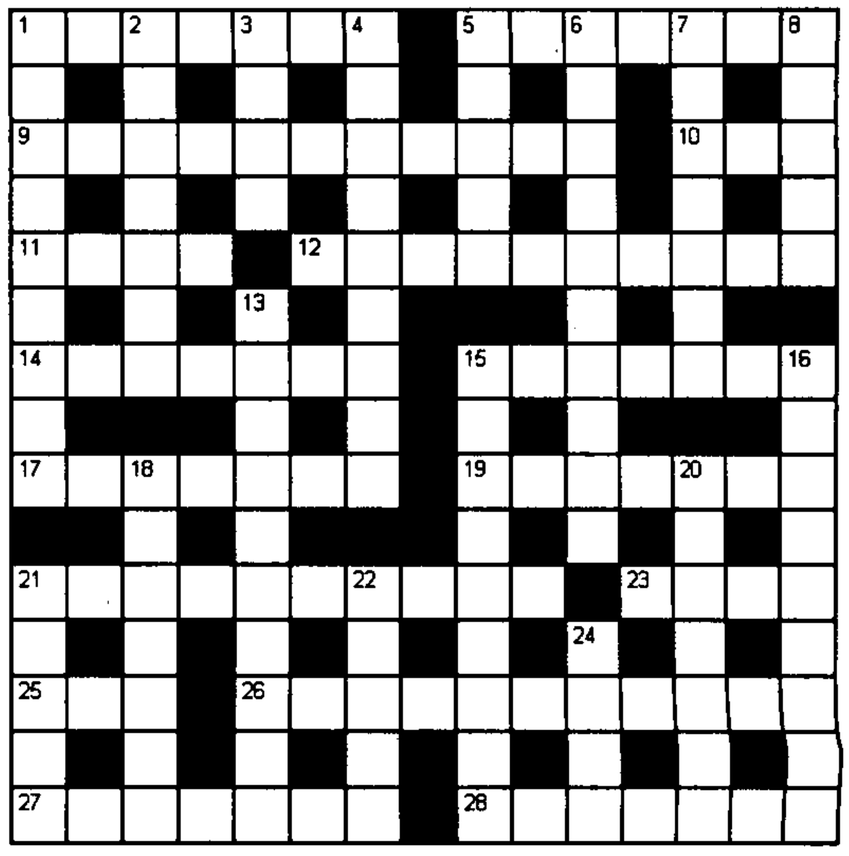


●*"While most women use tampons to stop things leaking out, some teenage girls in Eastern Finland have started using tampons to enable things to get in. Tampon sales in this region have recently rocketed, because girls are soaking them in vodka, and then inserting them in an attempt to get drunk. The idea, it seems, is that the liquid will seep out, and the alcohol will then enter their blood stream and get them intoxicated, but without giving them smelly breath that can be detected by their parents."* (Item in Fastigheter [Nordic Business Report], 8/3/99. Spotter: Darren Ingram)



EYE CROSSWORD 129

by Cyclops — *£100 prize*



ACROSS

1 Main experienced bloke, clumsy tall sod (3,4)
5 Get someone out of their knickers to find out how their operation went? (7)
9 It's not the first course that's recommended by Blair (3,5,3)
10 Curb crack (3)
11 The luvvie hugged by — ahem — Mandelson (4)
12/16 Conservatives connected with theft: speculators, they believe it's all a government plot (10,9)
14 Former PM going topless for Netanyahu, perhaps? (7)
15 Team assembled by Blair just for display purposes? (7)
17 Waggle stiff 'un and make your exit (5,2)
19 A policeman has to get on and have sex, that is, afterwards (7)
21 Wobble-arse Nadir (4-6)
23 Claw prick (4)
25/8 Conservative has-been, unstable edgy fool (3,5)
26 Cold spunk is recycled for money (11)
27 Backside on topless filly serves to declare support for candidate (7)
28 Sweeps high fliers to self-destruction (7)

DOWN

1 Hip Tone's out with Bob, drinking (2,3,4)
2 One who fantasises about dear Cyclops, right? (7)
3 The craving one has to mount a cult hero (4)
4 Tits rearranged, boob tucked in, by ALF member? (9)
5 Blue tendencies characteristic of much of Southern England? (5)
6 The filth yobs broadcast accepted by Sky indefinitely (4,2,4)
7 Really get into the character of fashionable, corny little thing (7)
8 (see 25)
13 The sort of tosser who curses his ego? (4-6)
15 With which to film a MCC collapse on request (9)
16 (see 12)
18 International organisation has joke with journalist (not cryptic) (7)
20 Up-to-the-minute Blair finally extricated from torrid surroundings (7)
21 Flower turns her on (5)
22 Be not put off by such forbidden food (1-4)
24 Some BBC leftist of significant importance on the staff (4)

£100 prize to first solution opened on 23.4.99. Entries to 'Crossword', Private Eye, 6 Carlisle Street, London W1V 5RG.

Solution to Crossword No. 128

Winner: W.R. LAMBERT

ACROSS: 1 Strip 4 Brainwash 9 Offbeat 10 Urethra 11/12 The right to roam 12 (see 11) 14 Dismember 16 Lenin 17 Franc 19 Straw poll 22 Ride 23 White paper 26 Almoner 27 Look-see 28 Mandelson 29 Lusty.

DOWN: 1 Snorted 2 Rafters 3 Presidency 4 Butch 5 Adulterer 6 Noel 7 Ashdown 8 Head man 13 Blow-up doll 15 Bosphorus 17 Firearm 18 Abdomen 20 Opposes 21 Larceny 24 Talon 25 Anne.

ST ALBION PARISH NEWS

Incumbent: Rev. A.R.P. Blair MA (Oxon)

Hullo!

And, contrary to what you may have heard about your vicar being tired and worn out by my duties, I have never felt more wide awake in my entire trousers.

Where was I? Yes, hullo everyone! And let's hear no more of this rubbish about me being exhausted through overwork.

As you can see, I am wide asleep and raring for bed. As it says in the Good Book, "The leopard shall lie down with the lamb and have a jolly good kip." That's from the *Book of Bedtime*, and I think we can all learn a lot from it.

Yes, it's true, I have been busy, working for peace in different parts of the world. And I'm perfectly well aware that, so far, there is rather more war than peace going on.

But that's only to be expected. And I did expect it, even though I didn't mention it to you in my last newsletter, because I didn't want to depress anyone.

"But have you thought this through, Vicar?" I'm always being asked, particularly by our friend in Tesco, who seems to wait for me there by the checkout just to ask me some, frankly, rather silly questions.

"Did you really think this one through, Vicar?" he asked. "Of course I did," I told him, trying to be polite.

"Then you knew it would be a complete balls-up?" he replied. Unfortunately, at this point, my interrogator somehow fell over backwards into the frozen desserts cabinet where he remained for some time.

So, you see, I am fighting fit, and

not at all tired. If I was tired, I might be irritable and lose my temper, and push people into freezer cabinets for asking silly questions about a war which is none of their business.

But, fortunately, I am not at all tired, and am looking forward to Easter.

Talking of Easter (and, incidentally, well done all the ladies for the marvellous flowers in the church!), some of you have asked me what our mission to Northern Ireland achieved at our recent very important meeting.

Well, thanks to a lot of hard talking by Mo (and myself!), everyone on all sides agreed that we would definitely go away and think very hard about the need for agreement.

You can't get more positive than that!

So, that's my message to you all this Christmas. Let's sleep on it, shall we?

Goodnight!

Tony

Verses From A Local Poet

Come friendly bombs and fall on
Belgrade.
Isn't that how peace is made?

Alistair Campbell
(no relation)

Parish Football

Many thanks to local businessman Mr Murdoch for his generous offer to sponsor our local Albion squad, which I have had to turn down. I know that Mr Murdoch seems to think that I agreed to this proposal (he has even had the team shirts made up with "Murdoch Adult Mags 'n' Vids" printed on them), but he must have misunderstood me. Perhaps the former churchwarden, Mr Mandelson, told him that the deal was done by mistake, but I certainly didn't! In fact, the first I heard about it was when I had to tell Mr Murdoch that his offer, though marvellous in its way, was not really appropriate at the moment.

"We can't have one man running everything in the whole parish," I told him, "unless it's me." T.B.

WELCOME BACK...

We are very happy to welcome back into the fold Mr Sarwar, who had some problems with the police, but has now been completely exonerated. Let me say that I personally always believed in his innocence, even though obviously I had to ban him from the church and ask parishioners not to shop at his store. T.B.

Parish Postbag

Dear Sir,

As someone who fought in the last war (unlike some young whippersnappers I could name), I was appalled by our vicar's warmongering sermon at Evensong last week. Surely, even someone as naive as he appears to be can appreciate how absolutely

Yours sincerely,
Denis Healey,
British Legion, Anzio Drive.

Dear Sir,

If our church stands for anything, it is surely peace and brotherhood. How exactly does bombing the

Yours faithfully,
T. Benn,
The Old Quakery, Teabag Road.

The editor reserves the right to cut letters for treasons of space. A.C.

The vicar, looking not at all tired, wishes all his parishioners "A Happy Eater"!

BALKAN WAR

BRITISH FLEET SAILS OUT

by Our Nautical Staff **Jane Fighting-Ship**

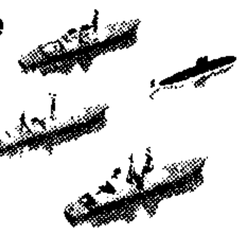
NOT since the days of the Armada has such a proud fleet set sail to do battle with Britain's foes.

This time Britain is sending a message to the Serbs — watch out for Jolly Jack Tar as he sails into Kosovo with all canons blazing.

Make no mistake, the ground war starts at sea.

THOSE SHIPS IN FULL

HMS Ineffective
HMS Indecisive
HMS Abitlate
HMS Er...
HMS That'sit.



SCHOOLBOY HURTS FINGER SHOCK

by Our World Affairs Staff
John Simpson

Eton, Tuesday

A 16-YEAR-OLD public school boy has hurt his finger in a game of rugby, it was revealed today. His condition is said to be stable and he is expected to make a full recovery in a few minutes *(Reuters)*.

FULL STORY pages 2, 3, 4, 5, 6.

OLD LADY SCALDS FOOT IN BATH

by Our Global Tragedy Staff
John Simpson

Mustique, Wednesday

A 68- YEAR-OLD divorcee has suffered a burnt foot after getting into a hot bath without checking the temperature of the water first. Paramedics rushed to the scene and her condition is now described as satisfactory *(P.A.)*

A Nation's Shame

by **Linda Lee-Potty**

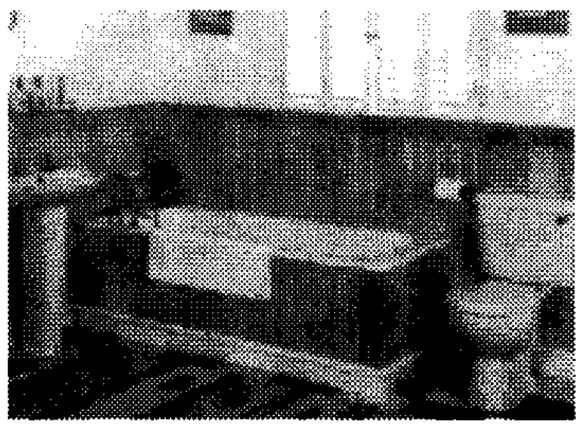
How could we let an old-age pensioner living alone on her paradise island get into a bath with no supervision from the Social Services? What kind of country have we become?

As the islanders tried to come to terms with their tragedy, one said, "It was an accident waiting to happen."

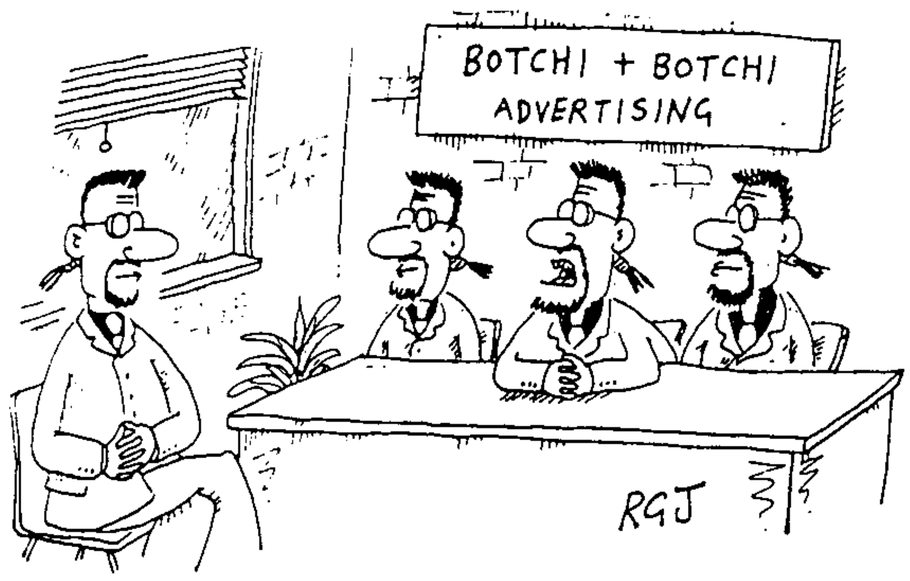
Meanwhile, in London, a demonstration outside Number Ten Downing Street demanded an immediate ban on "Killer Hot Baths" for Britain's elderly. And about time too.

How many more old ladies will it take before Blair acts?

Ring our Hot Bath Line now on 78-79-80-81-Phew, what a scalder!



Deadly bath of the type believed to have been involved in the old lady's brush with death.



"You're the sort of individual thinker we want on our creative team"

POLICE FOLLOW UP NEW LEADS IN LAWRENCE CASE

by Our Crime Staff **Tariq Alibi**

INSPECTOR "Knacker of the Yard" Knacker last night claimed that his officers were being "deluged with phone calls" after millions of people claimed to have seen five men acting suspiciously on ITV on Thursday evening.

Said the Inspector, "We have to take these calls very seriously, as they may lead to important new clues as to the identity of Stephen's killers."

He continued, "I particularly want to talk to a coloured gentleman, a Mr Bashir, who seems to know far too much about it for his own good. I am appealing to any witnesses to come forward and identify Mr Bashir. Obviously, their names and addresses will be treated in complete confidence and published on the Internet."

GARRY BULLSHIT ON THE BOX

Did you see the lads from Eastenders on Martin Bashir's show? Didn't they do well? What a gang of loveable scamps and rogues. Come on ITV, give Jamie, Neil and Co a series.

BRITAIN'S SUPER RICH

(Continued from page one)

94 Ted and Bob Spivvy

The twin brothers from Hounslow opened their first mobile phone warehouse last week and are now said to be worth £110 million. They sell on average 6,000 phones an hour and are opening new shops at a rate of 2 per minute.

95 Lord Starborgling

The 14th Earl of Corby (the "trouser press heir") inherited his father's trouser press fortune in June 1995 and has since diversified into tie and shirt presses, thus increasing the firm's annual revenue to £600 billion.

He now plans to open the world's first Museum Of The Trouser Press at his ancestral home at Castle Starborgling, Yorks.

96 Tracy Poppadom

The Bradford chutney-to-samosa entrepreneur arrived in England six months ago and is already worth £200 million thanks to her revolutionary culinary concept of filling traditional samosas with Italian pizza toppings. She is the first Asian woman samosa manufacturer to make this list.

97 Nigel Nerd

The fourteen-year-old computer whizzkid from Croydon invented "Nerd 2000" in March this year, a web-search-internet-program which has made him the world's wealthiest Croydon teenager. Nerd sold his company in April to Intelquok for an estimated $200,000 million billion. He is currently working on his GCSEs.

98 HM The Queen Mother

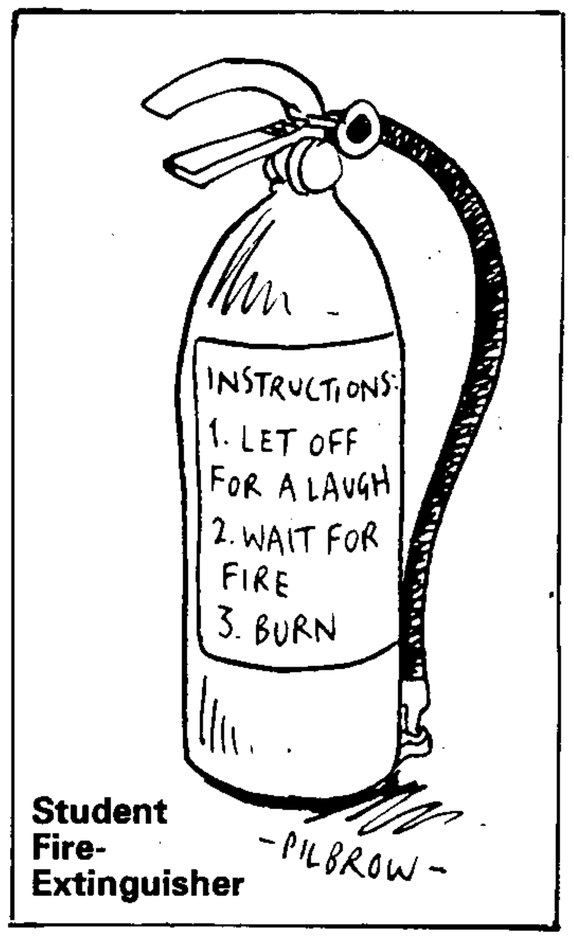
Formerly at Number Two on the list, the Queen Mother has had a disappointing year due to injudicious investments on Lucky Lad (2.30 Uttoxeter) and Saucy Ned (3.45 Haydock Park).

(That's enough boring rich people. Ed.)

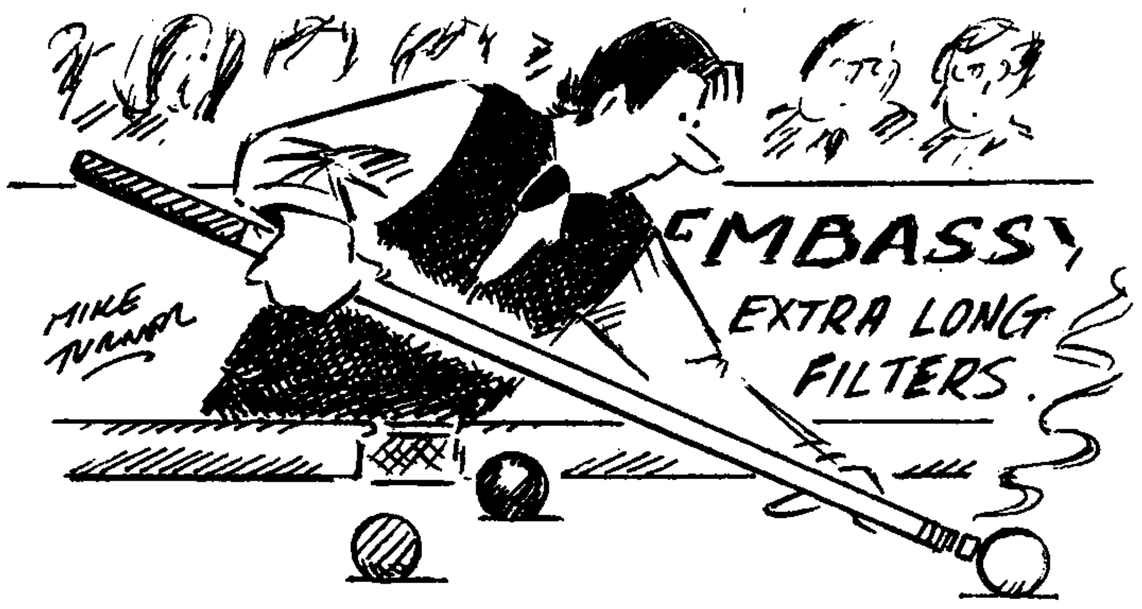
COURT CIRCULAR

LONDON
The Mistress Royal, Mrs Camilla Parker-Knowles, represented the Royal Family at a special service of Thanksgiving yesterday for the life and work of Sir David of Frost. Also in attendance were Dame Enid Rancid, Sir Terence Wigon, Lady Joanna Luvvie, Lord Fry of Wry, Sir Angus Deeptan, Lady Tara-Ra-Boomdiay, Sir "Dave" Mellor (representing the Federation of Disgraced Former Politicians), and Lord Archole (representing the National Association of Insider Traders).

The music for the service was provided by Lord Lord-Webber and his brother Lord Julian Lord-Webber with a selection of songs from the musical "Fat Cats" and a final rendition of the theme tune from Sir David's television show "No one's watching on Sunday (because they're all in bed)".



Student Fire-Extinguisher



★ POLLY FILLER IN NEW YORK ★

SO, here I am in the Big Breakfast (as we New Yorkers call it) enjoying a huge plate of waffles and grits — sunny side up. Everything is different on this side of the lake: you know, they call the pavements "sidecars", lifts are known as "escalators" and if you want the loo you have to ask for "the John's Room".

Still, some things are the same. The useless Simon is complaining that he can't get the cricket on any of the hotel's 375 TV channels and the toddler Charlie (henceforth to be known as "Chuck", since, like most American males, that is how he ends every evening) is eating nothing but McDonald's, which (just our luck) has opened a branch over here in New York as well.

I'M house hunting for a "loft flat" in downtown Manhattan, trawling the "pavewalks" from Upper West 47th Street to Lower East 98th. That's another thing about America — all the street names are numbers. Broadway is known as "5th Avenue" and for Wall Street read "Seven Eleven".

If that wasn't irritating enough, the shops are full of rude people telling you to "have a nice day". I've started telling them that I *would* if only they'd stop saying "Have a nice day". I was in Macy's on Saks and Bloomingdale Avenue last week with Chuck shopping for baby baseball caps (a real bargain at $750) when some ghastly American woman came up and said, "I love your accent." "Well, I hate yours," I replied, at which the stupid woman (or "broadwalk", as they are known) took offence. Haven't they heard of irony here? Evidently not.

Anyway, so far "NYPD" is a bit of a disappointment. I haven't been mugged, I haven't bumped into Frasier and all the cars are driving on the wrong side of the road.

Still, I'll keep you posted on the Filler Invasion of America — next week: nannies, shopping malls and the search for a decent cup of apple pie.

As we say "United-State-Side" — Chowder!

©Polly Filler

MAD BOMBER SAYS 'I REGRET NOTHING'

by Our Bomb Staff
Conor Cruise O'Missile

A MAN known as "the Mad Bomber" last night confessed to launching a "campaign of terror" from his home in Downing Street, central London.

The man, known only as "Mardi Blair", admitted sending out

ransom demands to a Serb businessman Mr Slobodan Massmurdovich, in which he threatened to bomb him into oblivion if he did not do what Mr Blair and his brother "Mardi Clinton" demanded.

BLAIR RAID

Eventually Blair was identified as the mastermind behind the bombings, after he was spotted every night on television.

He told the court: "These were not real threats. No one could have taken me seriously, as I had promised not to send in ground troops."

Mobile Phones Are Good For You

by Our Science Staff **James Nokia**

EARLIER fears that mobile phones can cause brain cancer and memory loss have been totally disproved by scientists.

Indeed, a new study carried out by Dr Voda Phone and Dr Cellnet of the Institute of Motorola Studies at the University of Orange proves that using a mobile phone may be actually beneficial.

The survey reveals that mobile phone use can:

- **improve mental performance by up to 1000 percent**
- **prevent hair loss**
- **increase sexual potency**
- **kill all known germs**
- **prolong life expectancy by up to 20 years.**

One To Miss

Most surprising of all was the finding that mobile phones can cause a huge increase in advertising revenue, so long as one isn't stupid enough to run silly features on the dangers of using them.

See advertisements pp. 8, 11, 12, 15, 24, 94.

HUSBAND

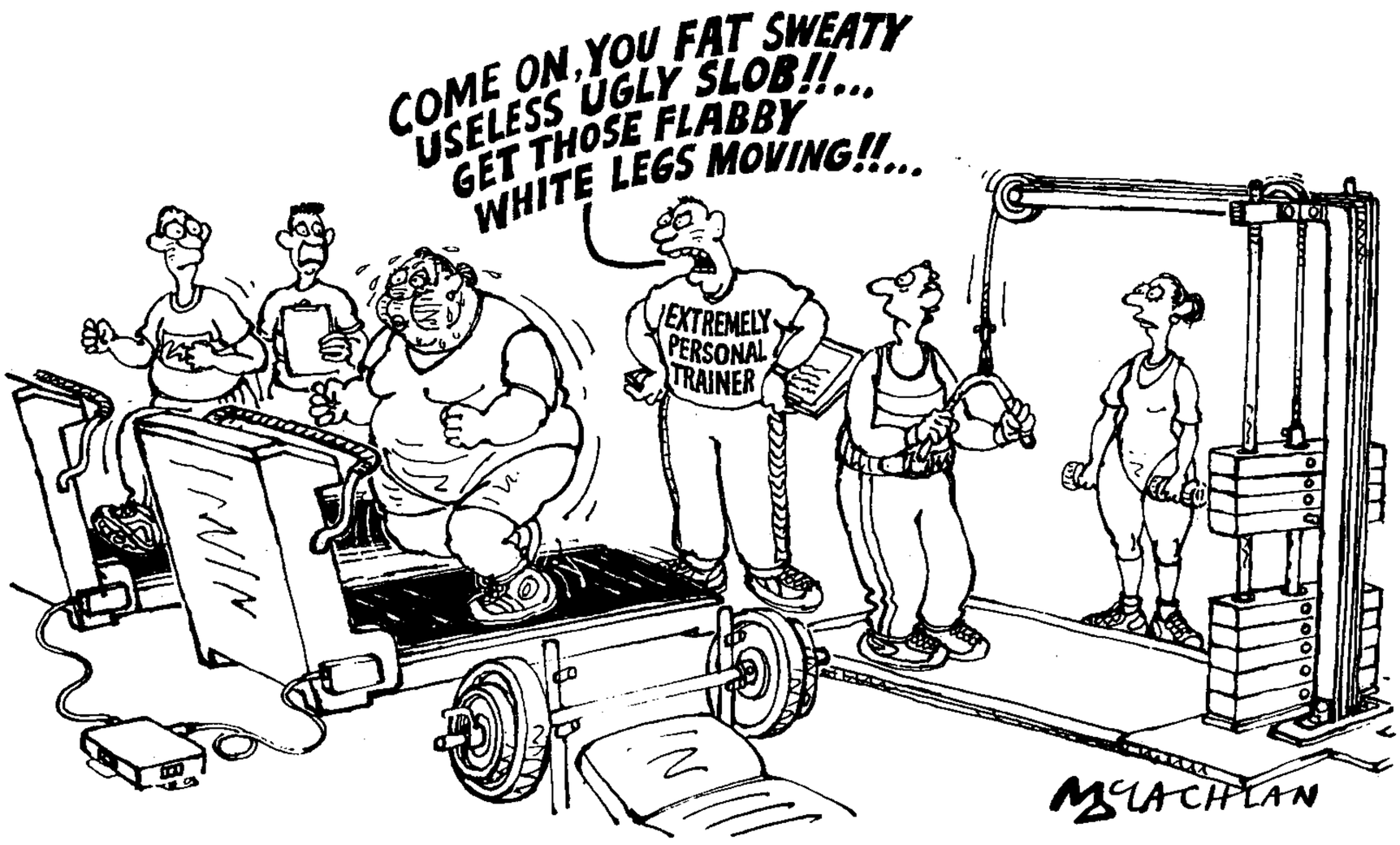
Every night we sit in 'ere gettin' pissed
RED LION
There must be more to life...more we can do!
mmm
We could go to the Bull'n ferret instead!
Yeah brill, let's do it!

1995 PEUGEOT 405 STYLE DIESEL 44,000 miles, grey metallic, immaculate condition, fully serviced **£5,500 o.n.o** —

N. Ireland Autotrader

ATJAYSONS on Swan Street and Tudor Street. New arrivals in linen skirt suits, pants and shirts. The latest styles in a variety of fabrics in both formal and casual wear for those trendy ladies. And for the boys, Jaysons has suits and tuxedos and beautiful velvet dresses.

Barbados Advocate



POETRY CORNER

In Memoriam Lionel Bart

So. Farewell then
Lionel Bart.

Famous songwriter.

Your musicals always
Ended with
An exclamation mark!

Oliver!
Twang!
Blitz!

And now you have
Gone!

E.J. Thribb! (17fi)

U.S. PLEDGE TO WIN WAR 'AT ANY COST'

by Our War Correspondent **W.F. Fyffes**

THE American President, Bill Clinton, has re-affirmed his commitment to total victory in the war in Europe.

"This is a war we cannot afford to lose," he told reporters. "We will not surrender to the tinpot banana growers in the Caribbean who are attempting to defy the international convention that America can do whatever it damn well likes."

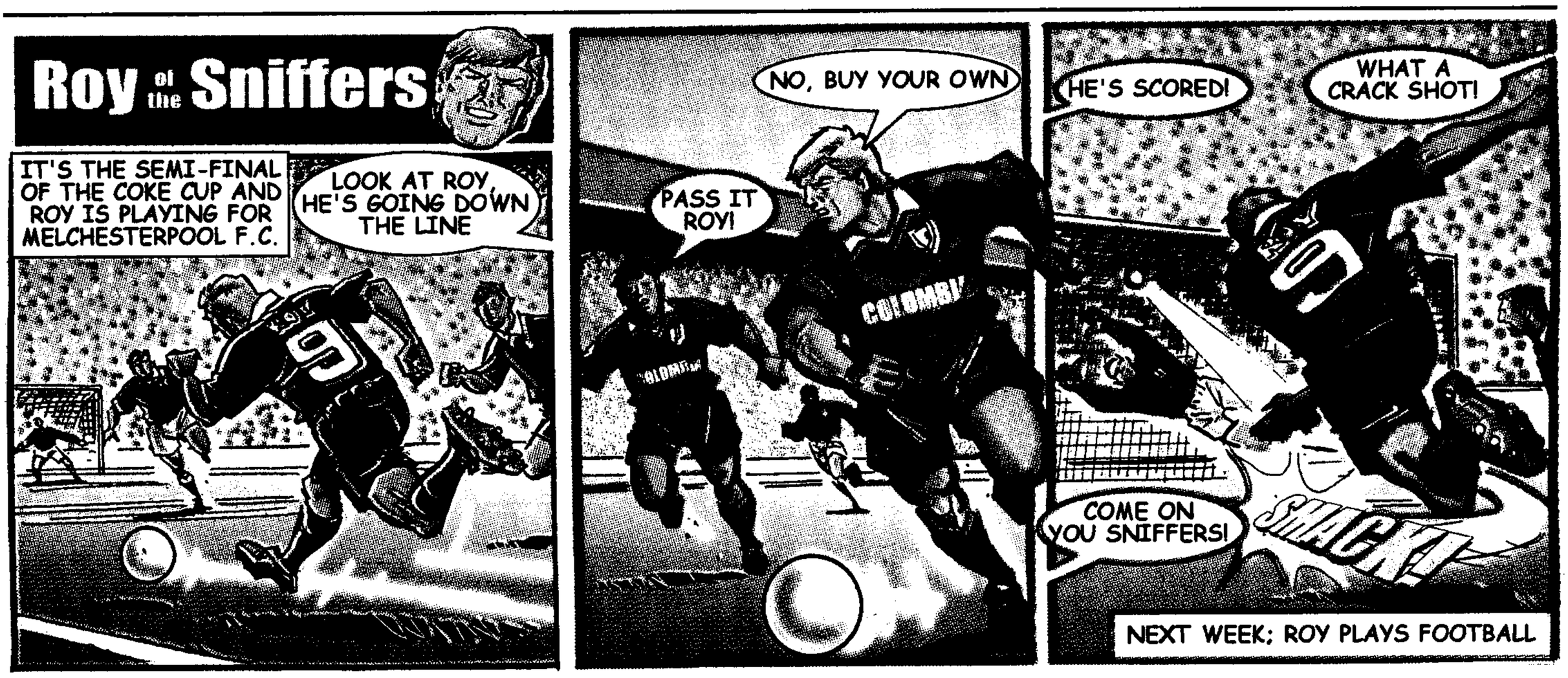
He continued, "We will not stop bombarding Europe with wave after wave of state-of-the-art American bananas — until we achieve our objective. A free market for our goods."

ALBANNANIA

The President concluded with a rousing appeal to the American people.

"I am asking you to support me against these evil islands with their sinister tropical fruits who are being aided by our enemies, such as Britain."

HRH The Queen & Prince Philip
Invite You All To
Foot The Bill For
The Marriage Between
HRH Prince Edward
And
Miss Sophie Rhys-Jones
On 19th June


Roy of the Sniffers
IT'S THE SEMI-FINAL OF THE COKE CUP AND ROY IS PLAYING FOR MELCHESTERPOOL F.C.
LOOK AT ROY, HE'S GOING DOWN THE LINE
NO, BUY YOUR OWN
PASS IT ROY!
HE'S SCORED!
WHAT A CRACK SHOT!
COME ON YOU SNIFFERS!
SMACK!!
NEXT WEEK: ROY PLAYS FOOTBALL

Letters to the Editor

War In The Balkans

SIR—For those who understand the history of the Balkans, the current NATO strategy looks increasingly pathetic.

Don't these people realise that the Macedonians are a proud island race, all personally descended from Alexander the Hun. No wonder these gallant warriors of the Steppes have for centuries fought off the advances of the Islamic hordes from neighbouring Albinonia.

Surely this is time for we Christians to stand shoulder to shoulder with our Serb brothers, by remaining neutral and leaving all these ghastly little people who live in the Balkans alone to kill each other in peace.

ALAN CLARK MP
Serbwood Castle

SIR—Of course we're all frightfully sympathetic to the plight of the millions of refugees whom we see on our television night after night, when we are not out to dinner with our friends. But, frankly, what could be more absurd than the idea that we in this tiny little island should be forced to admit thousands of these primitive peasants to Britain, no doubt to sponge off our welfare state like those awful Kurds. Surely the country to which all these refugees should be sent is America, which has plenty of suitable places to put them, eg the Grand Canyon. Anyway, it's all Mr Clinton's fault that we've got into this mess, and it should now be up to him to sort it all out.

Lady OLGA BOATMAN
Ephraim St Hardcastle, Berks

SIR—No one can hope to understand the present situation in the Balkans without an intimate knowledge of the recent history of this troubled region. In 1943 I was parachuted into central Kosovonia (now Kosovenia) to assist the Croat partisans under Jan Fascisto, the leader of the PQVD Militia, in their advance over the River Murda to attack the Royalist Serb partisans, led by General Mikhail Nazivich, who were at that time assisting the Wehrmacht in their attempt to subdue the beleaguered Bosno-Hertzarentakar enclave occupied by the Albano-Montenegro Chetniks under Col. Vlad Impala. To cut a long story short, I was immediately arrested and took no further part in the war. However, my experiences there led me to a firm conviction that it is very foolish to underestimate the fighting capabilities of Johnny Serb, especially when his anger has been roused.

Sir FITZROY MACLOON (Dec'd)
Tiko Towers, Ayrshire

SIR—Nothing about this war has shocked me more than the sight of a minister of the British Crown, Mrs Clare Short, arriving in Macedonia in a pair of patent leather shoes. Such discourtesy to her Macedonian hosts was truly unforgiveable. Surely a pair of stout Wellington boots should have been included in her luggage by her civil servants. Truly, it can be said that Whitehall was unprepared for this so-called catastrophe.

Lady PRISTINA BROWN
Killycroat, County Clareshort, Eire

SIR—No one seems to have thought through the implications of allowing the displaced Kosovans to settle in neighbouring countries. For example, the ethnic mix in Macemurdia is currently finely balanced at 27.3 percent Serbs; 31.4 percent Muslims; and 32.7 percent journalists trying to interview the above. Any further influx of minority populations could well create a domino effect, leading to intervention by the Bulgaro-Albranians, the Greco-Hungarians and the Slovenio-Moldovans, and all the other ethnic minorities who comprise what Bismark described as "Europe's hot potato waiting to turn into a tidal wave". We, like he, should know when to leave well alone.

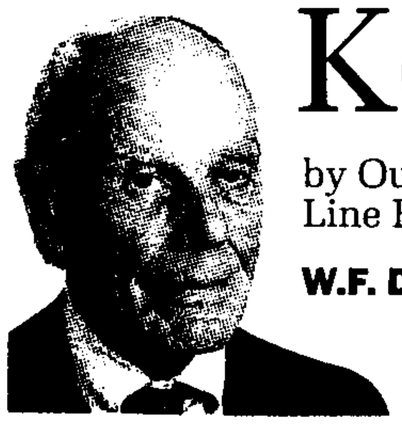
Prof Sir B. O'CROAT
Institute of Balkanological Studies
University of Tiranamisu

SIR—As an independent commentator who holds no brief for either the drug-peddling Marxists of the KLA or the warmongering Fascists of NATO, I am shocked at the way the slavish British media are ignoring the tragic plight of thousands of Serbs, who have been forced from their homes to go into Kosovo and murder everybody. And what of the much-maligned St Slobodan of Milosevic, whose only crime seems to be that he is a mass-murderer and genocidal lunatic. It is scarcely helpful to demonise this heroic figure as a flimsy excuse for Western plans to drive the gallant people of Serbia into the sea.

Sir ALFRED SERBMAN
Independent Friends of Serbia
The Old Thatch, Belgrade

SIR—President Clinton has made a catastrophic blunder in trying to win a war by bombing alone. To be sure of victory, you have to have troops on the ground, as I discovered in Vietnam, Laos and Cambodia.

Dr HENRY KISSINGER
The Old Level Killing Field,
Washington, U.S.



Kosovo

Tuesday 11.10

by Our Front-Line Reporter

W.F. Deedes

NOT SINCE my days as a cub reporter covering the Third Crusade in 1189 have I witnessed such extraordinary scenes (contd 1194)

"We're waiting for the cloud cover to break"

Why I Am So Brilliant

JOHN HUMBUG Answers Critics Of His Aggressive Interviewing Style

HOW DARE some jumped-up little journalist accuse me, the great John Humbug, of being rude to ministers about the conduct of the war?

The Today programme is a central pillar of our democratic process. Presenting it day after day is a serious undertaking, which requires courage, steadfastness and firmness of purpose.

It is vital that the British people should rally behind us at this critical time, and not sit sniping on the sidelines, writing rude articles about me.

I have made my aim in this war absolutely clear. It is to maintain a daily bombardment against the enemy, until they are forced to their knees and battered into submission by such state-of-the-art questions as "Let's face it, minister, you don't know what you're doing, do you, you twit?"

OK, so a few questions go astray and hit the wrong targets. But this is no reason why I should declare a ceasefire. I shall continue to assault these wretched politicians until they run up the white flag and say "You're right, John. I'd never have thought of that. I resign, and bless you for showing me the way."

Yorkshire's largest hotel, the Leeds Marriott, has appointed **Nicholas Northam** as general manager. He has been with the Whitbread-owned group for eight years and previously helped ruin the Bristol and Portsmouth Marriotts. *Yorkshire Post*

THE ALTERNATIVE VOICE

Dave Spart, Assistant Deputy Chair of the National Union of Non-Teaching Delegates (Tufnell Park Branch)

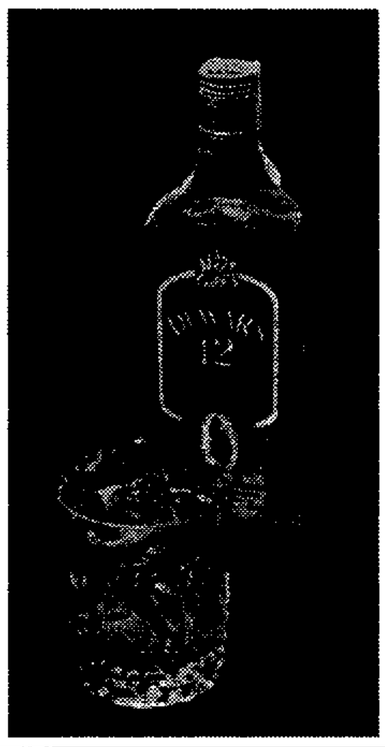
... er it is utterly sickening to see the Tory Government under Mrs Margaret Blair and her henchman Blunkett attempting to impose so-called "performance related" pay on the professional teaching community, ie instituting a regime of teacher appraisal based solely on the grounds of ability viz turning the clock back to the out-moded concept of "selection", er... I mean, we as teachers do not judge our pupils on the basis of their performance in the classroom, so why should we be subjected to this... er... surely we need a fair "comprehensive" system of mixed ability teachers allowing good and bad teachers in the same schools, thus reflecting a fairer non-judgemental society... er... in fact, Mr Blunkett's performance as Education Secretary is so abysmal that he should be forced on the basis of his results to... er... hang on... er... have a pay rise... er... *(cont. p. 94)*

NEW FAYED FOOTBALL DRAMA

PRODUCT RECALL

Scottish Salmond

THE manufacturers SNP Ltd have discovered a serious defect in the above product. Anyone who is in contact with the product may well smell something rather fishy, arousing suspicions that the Salmond has "gone off" and become rotten. It must be emphasised that the Salmond is wholly unfit for general consumption and should be avoided at all costs. Do not return the Salmond to your nearest constituency, as this could lead to a mass-outbreak of Salmondella which could poison the entire United Kingdom.



Auld Donny Dewar's
FINEST LABOUR MALT

110% Proof That Devolution Is A Rotten Idea

"A wee dram afore ye go to sleep"

HEATH'S PRIVATE VIEW

"Now, enough of me, what's been happening in your life, Sarah?"

NatWest **Head Office**

To: Mr S. Milosevic — Loan A/c No. 17234/S/DH

Dear Sirb,

It has come to our attention that the above loan account, arranged in 1996, is still outstanding in the amount of £50 million.

You will recall that security for the loan comprised the following freeholds and other assets situated in the former Yugoslavia, viz:

3 bridges over Danube River
1 cement works at Milosevicograd
1 hair-dryer factory, doubling as ammunition plant
1 police headquarters
3 apartment blocks
1 NatWest bank (Tito St. branch)

We understand that these assets have recently been destroyed.

We would appreciate notification of your plans regarding repayment of the above loan at your earliest convenience.

Failure to repay this loan will inevitably result in heavy increases in charges to all our UK customers.

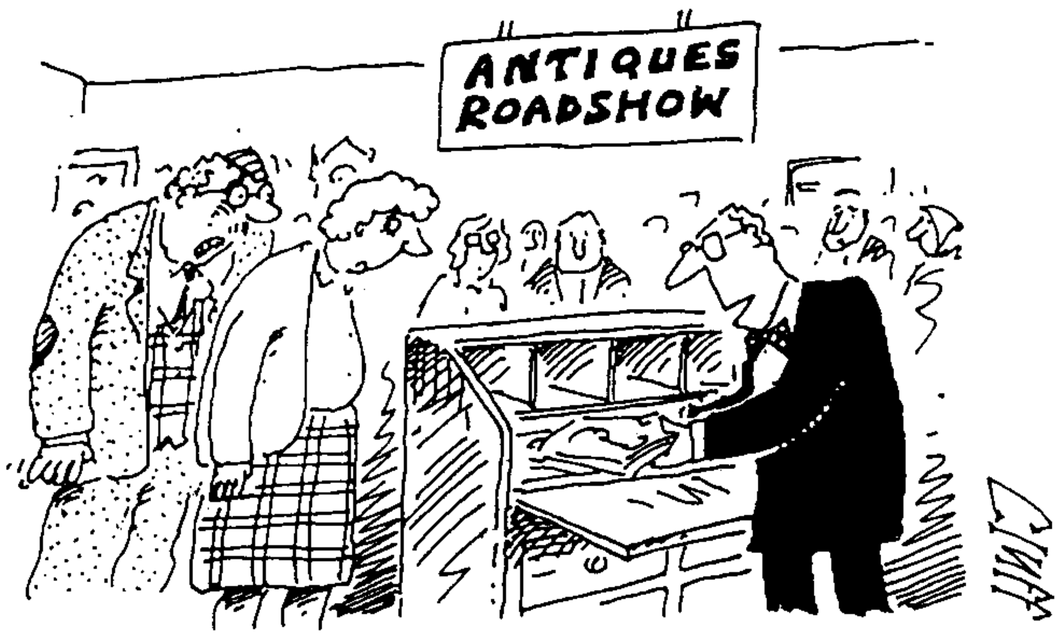
You have been warned.

With kind regards,

Your old friend,

Douglas

Lord Hurd of Pergua,
Manager.



"...And here in this secret drawer we still have a particularly squalid selection of Scandinavian hardcore porn magazines"

THE NEW FACE OF CRICKET

by Our Sporting Staff
W.G. Grace-Kelly

MAKE no mistake — cricket will never be the same again.

Now that Channel Four has taken over from the BBC, the stuffy, cake-munching old boy world of Jonners and Blowers will be swept away for ever, and transformed into a new, modern, switched-on, cool, happening game.

And the new face of cricket will be glamorous 23-year-old Sally Jockstrap, a media studies graduate, specially picked because she is blonde, young and sexy *(surely "has an encyclopaedic knowledge of the game"? Ed)*.

GEE WISDEN

Ms Jockstrap has already outlined her plans for livening up the coverage when Channel Four takes over this summer.

"We're not going to go for dull old ball-by-ball commentary," she giggled yesterday in the Lord's Long Room. "Instead the batting bits will be punctuated by music videos, children's cartoons, fashion reports and repeats of Friends.

"That way," she explained, "we can bring cricket to a wider audience — ie, the millions of people who don't like it."

HOW IT WILL LOOK

Sri Lanka v. Zimbabwe (Day Two)

GCSE — Visual Arts Module 1

One question only to be attempted

Look closely at the picture, showing Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Schools Mr Christopher Woodhead going about his duties.

Imagine what he might be saying to the young sixth-former at his side.

When you have thought carefully, write your suggested text in the bubble provided.

Time allowed: 10 days

Completed exam papers to be sent to Smutty Bubble Competition, Private Eye, 6 Carlisle Street, London W1V 5RG.

DIARY

Mark: Origh, mate?

Lard: Origh!

Mark: Owyadoin, mate?

Lard: Origh, mate! An owyadoin?

Mark: Gray! Origh, mate?

Lard: Origh!

Mark: Owyadoin?

Lard: Origh, mate!

Mark: Gray! But firs les ear this, frm Madonna!

Lard: Phwoar, Madonna! Carnby bad!

Mark: Yoof ancy er or whar, mate?

Lard: Nah! She's a righ fat slapper, righ! Not my typa totty, mate!

Mark: Put it back, Lardy! We vall got one!

Lard: Oyoy!

Mark: Ye wanna snog Madonna or summat?

Lard: Nomme, mate! Gerraway wiv ya!

Mark: The time is ten past —

Lard: — two.

Mark: So now les hear this frm Sordid Drain...

●

Mark: This is MarknLard on Radio One. Wowcum to the show! An all tha stuff, eh, Lardy boy?

Lard: Origh!

Mark: Owyadoin, mate?

Lard: Origh!

Mark: I tellya wha, Lardy boy, we gorra gray show line dup!

Lard: Thas righ, may!

Mark: So wharawedoin today, then, mate?

Lard: You tell me, mate!

Mark: Avin a laff an all that stuff!

Lard: Ooh, aye!

Mark: Pullin a few legs! Quack! Quack!

Lard: Nice! Yer can pull my leg anyday, mate! But I'd rather Madonna pull dit! Not jist me leg niver!

Mark: Worra fa slag! Leave i, Lard! The time is two —

Lard: — forty six. Cwor, ah cudn alf do wiv sum noooky.

Mark: Okey. Coorren taffairs, mate. Worrabah tha Queen Mum? Is she 99 this year or wor?

Lard: Worra slag, eh?!

Mark: Too righ, mate!

Lard: She's crap she is. 'n crap in bed, too, I bet.

MARK AND LARD

Mark: You sed it, mate! Say a bigello to Charlie from Didcot!

Lard: Bigello, Charlie frm Didcot!

Mark: More after this, from Manic Street Wossits...

●

Mark: Origh, mate?

Lard: Breeyun!

Mark: Weeya tell all the lads at Laserprin in Worksop to bookle darn to sum work?

Lard: Bookle darn ter sum work, lads!

Mark: Cheekeh munkeh! And canyer sayer bigello ter orl at Manor Schoo in Woolveramptern?

Lard: Bigello lads!

Mark: Eh, tellya wor, don forgeh the lassiz, may!

Lard: Noh lakleh! Bigello, lasses! Cwor, ah don arf fanceh deh lassiz, me!

Mark: Betcha do, mate! So dwy!

Lard: Poot it aweh, mate! Wiv orl goh wun! Quack! Quack!

Mark: Les av a phone-in quiz, mate! 'Ere's a lisna! Ask im wot two and two mek?

Lard: Ere, you — lisna. Wot's two and two mek, lisna?

Listener: Five.

Mark: Neely.

Listener: Six.

Lard: Ah'll givit ye.

Mark: An the time is two —

Lard: Sixty three.

Mark: So let's get stook in — wiv dis, duh latest frum Blur!

●

Mark: Doan tarf fancy birra totty, mate.

Lard: Don't lay yer anz on my bird, mate, or there'll be trouble, righ?

Mark: Givova! No way! Curritout! Hood want noooki with that slapper, mate, no offence, like? The words fat and arse springter mind!

Lard: Thanx, ameego. Cwor, my knob ain't arf sore. Quack! Quack!

Mark: Teyawha, wha abow this Kosivo thing, may?

Lard: Kossy wha?

Mark: KOSSI-VO, mate?

Lard: Prefer kissy-vo, me. Nice bitter snog, tasty bird, carnby bad.

Mark: Thassenuff talk bou Kosiwotsit. Slobodon. Wosora name's thar?

Lard: The words silly and name springter mind. Nuff of the heavy stuff, mate. Snot Newsnigh, righ?

Mark: Wharawe doin today?

Lard: Still ter cum, latiz frum Gobshite.

Mark: After this, frum Catatonyer...

●

Mark: For all ah care, ye can stuff ye Lord Reiths.

Lard: Lord la-di-bloody-dah more like.

Mark: Inform? Edjerkayt? Stuff that fralark, mate!

Lard: You know wor I call i, mate, I call it —

Mark: — Crap.

Lard: — Who sed tha? I thor ah heard someone say —

Mark: Crap.

Lard: Ooh, aye? Norty, norty! Mark n Lard ere thru til 4, everyone.

Mark: I got my thing out, mate. Bigger than Lord Reith's, intit?

Lard: It's angin ou the toperyer trousiz, may!

Mark: Make the missus happeh, may!

Lard: Sooner she gives me one the betta, may!

Mark: Yerwha?

Lard: Sooner she gives me wun of 'er cream buns the betta! She meks a luvleh cream bun, duz yaw Missus!

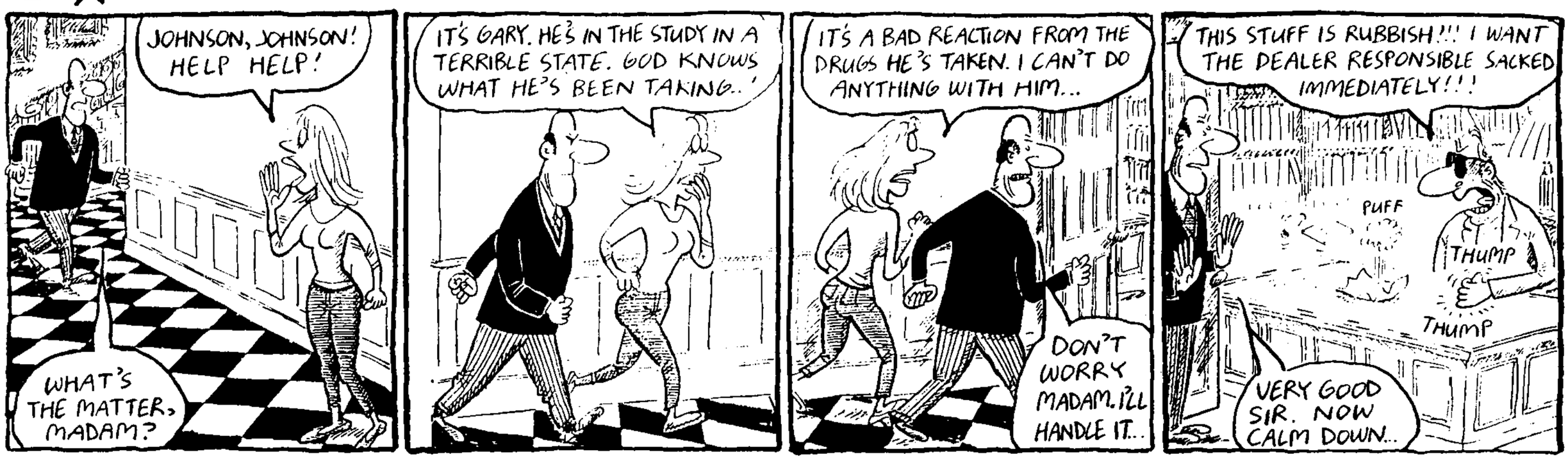
Mark: An thaz noh all she meks creamy, may!

Lard: Oy! Oy! This must be what the Beeb means by edjerkayt!

Mark: Like crap it is, mate. Quack! Quack!

Celeb

LIGGER


JOHNSON, JOHNSON! HELP HELP!
WHAT'S THE MATTER, MADAM?
IT'S GARY. HE'S IN THE STUDY IN A TERRIBLE STATE. GOD KNOWS WHAT HE'S BEEN TAKING..'
IT'S A BAD REACTION FROM THE DRUGS HE'S TAKEN. I CAN'T DO ANYTHING WITH HIM...
DON'T WORRY MADAM. I'LL HANDLE IT..
THIS STUFF IS RUBBISH!!! I WANT THE DEALER RESPONSIBLE SACKED IMMEDIATELY!!!
PUFF
THUMP
THUMP
VERY GOOD SIR. NOW CALM DOWN...

Literary Review

Shakespeare in love?

Bruce Chatwin
Nicholas Shakespeare
(Harvill, £20)

THERE are perhaps four kinds of biography: good books about nice people; bad books about nice people; good books about nasty people; and bad books about nasty people. And while the sight of a first-rate biographer inspecting a first-rate subject is often pleasantly illuminating, there is an equal pleasure to be got from the spectacle of a first-rate biographer examining someone who, well, doesn't quite measure up to the no doubt exacting standards of humanity and decency that the majority of the population generally espouses. You get the picture?

Ten years after Bruce Chatwin's death, horribly and semi-publicly from Aids, the flames of his memory have been kept burning at half-a-dozen wayside shrines: a collection of posthumous journalism (*What Am I Doing Here*, 1989); reissues; a memoir by his former editor Susannah Clapp. The images, too, are set in stone. Bruce, blue-eyed and long-limbed, posed on distant verandahs or striding off into the mysterious yonder. Bruce, tousle-headed but serious-faced, chatting to bearded monks on a Greek mountain-top. If there isn't, at some point, a film of all this, then I'll eat my jellaba.

As a chum of Chatwin's (Bruce was apparently consulted over a first novel, levying tribute by way of a dedication) Shakespeare is a basically sympathetic guide to this succession of dawns and departures, emotional abandonments and high-grade socialising. No amount of sympathy, though, can prevent his biography from turning into a meticulous demolition job.

In a sense the paradoxes that a sustained examination of Chatwin's life cast up are only what one would expect — those writers, they *always* crib their material, antagonise their hosts and so on, and one might have guessed that the man who travelled light would sashay into Delhi airport with 40 kilograms of excess baggage. What shocks, after the books and the saucy boyfriends and the chats with Jackie Onassis have been and gone, is the sheer ghastliness of some of the behaviour.

Perhaps the most awful moment in this book comes in the early 1970s when Bruce, then having a whale of a time as "art consultant", later staff writer, on the *Sunday Times Magazine*, marches into a restaurant with his wife Elizabeth and a gang of journalist cronies. The only table to hand is incapable of seating all those present. Incredibly, without batting an eye, Bruce tells his wife to go away. Equally incredibly, she goes. I wondered about this for a long time — not so much at Chatwin's elephantine gracelessness, or even the meek, wifely devotion (she, by the way, emerges from the book as an almost saintly figure) as at the reaction of the other people present. Did anyone say anything, you wonder. Or do anything? Ah well, it's a long time ago and the curtains of myth have long since been drawn over this depressing little tableau, but you get the feeling that Bruce was simply allowed to go on being Bruce.

No one in these enlightened times would contend that a writer's life has the capacity to invalidate his work, that because x, say, was a wife-abuser his books are automatically not worth reading (though curiously enough, this line was tried a few years back with Larkin — he was a racist, so *therefore* his poems were racist too). All the same, one can hardly keep the writer out of the room while considering his darling productions.

Reading Shakespeare's horrifyingly fascinating take on this subsidised, *fais ce que tu voudras*-kind of life, your thoughts turn, inevitably, to Orwell's famous essay on Salvador Dali, *Benefit of Clergy*. Here Orwell expounds and criticises the idea that certain artists can get away with behaviour that would be unacceptable in any other social stratum, well, because they're artists don't you know? Bruce's life was a large-scale exercise in Benefit of Clergy. He behaved that way, you feel, merely because a collection of enraptured observers let him. The human cost, as dinner table after dinner table echoed to the sound of Bruce being "so amusing", was endlessly rocked up.

Bruce Chatwin is, of course, a bit too long and a bit too relentless in its accumulated details of how Bruce farted, scratched himself, shat in public and so on. Its cumulative effect, though, is awesome — a kind of object-lesson for the aspiring writer on how not to behave. As ever in these eviscerations, one longs for the spectacle of a writer prepared to let the writing speak for itself, who, against all the odds and enticements, is content to live that most hackneyed of existences, an ordinary life.

"Now can we settle down and start a family?"

Never mind the Pollux

The Ground Beneath Her Feet
Salman Rushdie
(Jonathan Cape, £18)

ALL right then, own up. Who gave Salman the key to the Myth-Kitty? Because whoever it is, the blighter's been and gone and nicked the lot. Orpheus and Eurydice, Castor and Pollux, Medea, Prometheus, Helen of Troy... someone even has a dog called Cerberus.

It's not just the classical myths either. Hindu figures such as Sita and Rama, Shiva, Rati and Kama get a look in too, along with a bunch from ancient Persian (Zoroaster, Cyrus, Darius, Xerxes), Mexican (Huracan, Quetzalcoatl) and Norse (Yggdrasil) myths. Even Shakespearean make-believe gets a mention (Prospero, Caliban et al) along with Marlowe's Faustus. Nor does the kiddies' library escape little Salman's depredations, with the *Lord of the Rings*, the *Wind in the Willows*, *Peter Pan*, the *Jungle Book* and the works of Hans Christian Andersen all being ransacked for ideas. The end, as they say, is listless.

Ostensibly this novel is a tale of love and death in the music biz, set against a background of social and political change in both India and the west over a period spanning from the 30s to the present day. On to this is bolted the central myth of Orpheus and Eurydice, the lyre-toting bard being played by one Ormus Cama, Bombay-born Parsi and musical prodigy, and the nymph whom he attempts to rescue from Hades after she dies being played by Vina Apsara, American-born but half-Indian, half-Greek rock goddess with a voice (get this) "to die for". It is the ground beneath her feet to which the title refers, since her abduction into the underworld occurs during a massive earthquake — rifts, cracks, tremors and shakes being one of the novel's main themes.

Nothing of course keeps the academics buzzing for longer than all that old stuff about gods and mortals. In this context it is instructive to recall the review Rushdie wrote back in 1990 of Christopher Ransmayr's *The Last World*, a novel about the Roman poet Ovid's banishment by the emperor Augustus to a remote town on the Black Sea. For banishment, read fatwah. And Ovid is, of course, famous for his whimsical retellings of Greek myths. Rushdie was clearly impressed by Ransmayr's reworking of Ovid's tales into a modern setting, but at the end of the review one got the impression he thought the job might have been done better...

"Too much of the power of this novel is borrowed; too much depends on the intimate network of allusions and references... This web becomes a trap; it ties down the characters and prevents them from coming fully to life. It is a brilliantly clever artiface, and full of the pain of rejected art, but it is more stone than bird."

U2 Salman, U2.

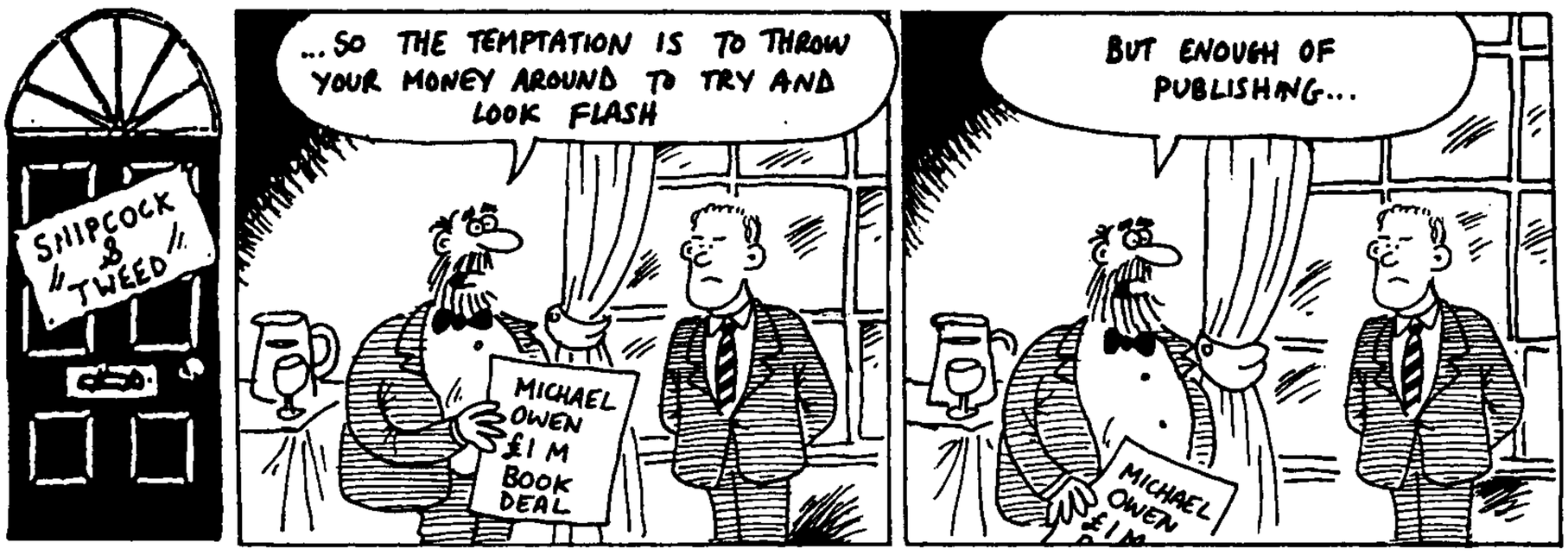
REMAINDERS OF THE DAY

The book: *The Crisis of Global Capitalism* by George Soros.

The advance: Believed to be about $300,000.

The hype: Purchased by Alan Samson and Philippa Harrison of Little, Brown in a great hurry at Frankfurt in October last year, the book was rushed out in November, in time for the global financial collapse that the financier believed would happen in January. "Soros believes that we are in a state of global crisis and that we must modify our behaviour," commented Harrison. "His prescription is in the book."

The slide: By April the only thing to have collapsed or been modified was the price of Soros' book, from £17.99 to £6.99 at Bookhouse in Villiers Street, London.


SHIPCOCK & TWEED
...SO THE TEMPTATION IS TO THROW YOUR MONEY AROUND TO TRY AND LOOK FLASH
MICHAEL OWEN £1 M BOOK DEAL
BUT ENOUGH OF PUBLISHING...
MICHAEL OWEN

BOOKS & BOOKMEN

■ MICHAEL HOLROYD's denunciation of the craft of biography to Andrew Lownie's recently formed Society of Biographers went down like... a lead balloon.

Holroyd denounced biographers, particularly those of a literary bent, as "talentless", "superfluous", "parasites", "jumped-up journalists", "virtual receivers of stolen money" and "slaves of their absurd and meagre theories".

"The essential truth is simple," he argued. "Flaubert was born, Flaubert wrote his novel, Flaubert died. It is his work, which is unique, that matters, not the ordinary experience which he shared with so many others."

How could the charming litterateur and biographer of Hugh Kingsmill (*Who he? Ed.*), Lytton Strachey, Augustus John and, in 900 volumes, George Bernard Shaw, denounce the craft when, back in 1987 he accepted £625,000 from Chatto & Windus, then under the command of his ex-lover Carmen Virago Callil, for the GBS?

Perhaps because New Chatto recently made a very modest offer to the greatest living biographer for his own *auto*biography. Dame Philippa Harrison at Little Brown Jug then snapped it up for a fortune, much to the fury of the Virago. Thus Holroyd's new war cry: biography bad, autobiography good.

■ THE three people who bought Grocer Heath's autobiography *The Course of my Life* (see *Eye* 971) will have come across a curious anecdote about his failure to be selected for the safe Tory seat of Ashford in March 1947.

The Kentish selectors opted instead for *Torygraph* hack Bill (now Lord) Deedes, and the Grocer notes sourly that Deedes "has since commented that I was rejected in this semi-rural constituency because I appeared there wearing a dark-blue suit and stiff white collar... I am flattered that he does not believe that he outdid me on merit," he adds rather smugly, "but the truth is that I did not at that time possess either a dark-blue suit or a stiff white collar". If Heath is so keen on telling the truth, perhaps he should have read *Dear Bill*, Deedes' own memoirs, published by Macmillan in 1997. In this book, Deedes mentions what he calls the "embarrassing legend" of the unsuitable suit and collar, but attributes it quite firmly to the late maverick Tory MP and "great prankster Humphry Berkeley".

■ A RECENT trade advertisement for *Perch Hill* by Adam Nicolson, published by Robinson this month, carried a quote from nature writer Richard Mabey stating that in Nicolson, "the Weald has found its Theroux".

It is hard to see what influence the author of *Sir Vidia's Shadow* can have had on Nicolson's rural epic. The only possible explanation is that, somewhere along the line, someone at Robinson has misheard Mabey, who in fact said compared Nicolson to Henry David Thoreau, whose 1854 book *Walden* tells the story of a similar move into the country.

■ NEW ZEALAND-based publishing company GreeNZone — which may or may not be related to West Country publisher Aspire, depending on what mood it is in (see *Eyes* 961 and 962), is building on the success of *Trial By Conspiracy*, Jonathan Boyd Hunt's "investigation" of the sleaze charges against Neil Hamilton.

Boyd Hunt's book, which claimed every charge against Hamilton was false, was not believed or bought by many people except, er, Neil Hamilton, who tried to unload a truckload on audiences at his various media appearances with the lovely Christine.

Recently the *Daily Mail* serialised GreeNZone's *In the Shadow of Saddam*, which claims its author Mikhael Ramadan, the spitting image of the Iraqi leader, stood in for him for several years. The *Mail* had to introduce the story with the dubious warning "Read his story and decide whether he's telling the truth". It does seem unlikely, given that neither the foreign office, CIA or opposition in Iraq have ever heard of Hussein's erstwhile stunt double.

Now, however, the company has gone for the tacky triple with Aspire's publication of *Who Really Killed Rachel?* by Colin Stagg, who was cleared of the murder of Rachel Nickell in front of her two-year-old son in 1992. The answer to the question in the title turns out to be merely "another man", which makes the justification for a book cashing in on the murder rather thin.

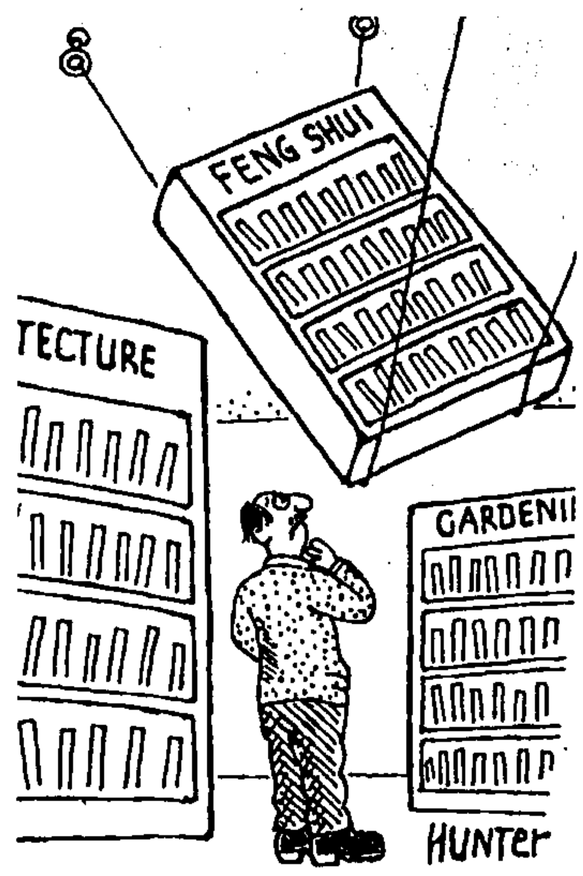
WHAT YOU DIDN'T MISS, Pt 94

To Convey Insomnia: The Spectatularlyboring 1928-1998

Simon Courtauld

...It was at this low-point in its fortunes, with the circulation fallen to an average of 13 copies, that the magazine was acquired by one of its more flamboyant proprietors. Major N.F. Hitler, though perhaps not amiably remembered by the staff (opinions varied from "probably not an Etonian" to "definitely not an Etonian") was responsible for several far-sighted innovations. The Rev. E. E. Chasuble began his long-running backgammon column, Peregrine Mincing wrote on stamp-collecting, while under the heading of "Who Do These People Think They Are?" the Duke of Devonshire contributed a series of highly amusing jokes told to him by his domestic servants.

Several of the staff, meanwhile, when not pressed into service to assist the magazine's creditors in removing their property from the premises, were laying the foundation for glittering careers. The Hon. Jennifer Starborgling, later to achieve celebrity as a TV chef, was employed for some time to prepare editorial lunches prior to her dismissal for assaulting a female assistant who "clearly had never disembowelled a grouse in her life, darling".



Title-pages from this period gave a glimpse of the intellectual flavour for which the magazine was becoming known. With influential articles such as "Piss Off Footie", "We Love Thatch" and "How much should you pay your game-keeper?" the *Spectator* soon reestablished itself at the cutting edge of national debate...

The Falklands crisis, which occurred shortly after this, provided a further opportunity for the magazine to perform its traditional function of helping chaps at the Garrick get to sleep after lunch (*"stimulating informed political discussion", shurely? Ed.*)

'Bookworm'

ACADEMIC Kent male, N/S, Christian, selling house seeks tall sphincter, with no family ties, mature or older. Letters only.

Adscene (Kent)

We will all use this book in our feminist theory classes. With agile control of the intertextuality of philosophy, anthropology, literary theory and psychoanalysis, Judith Butler looks at the problems of essentialism and/in gendering. She uses the dimension of gendered homosexuality as a critical instrument to examine the negotiation of woman's body. This powerful and constructive political autocritique of gender theory performs, on its way, a critique of the ethical philosophy of gender in general.

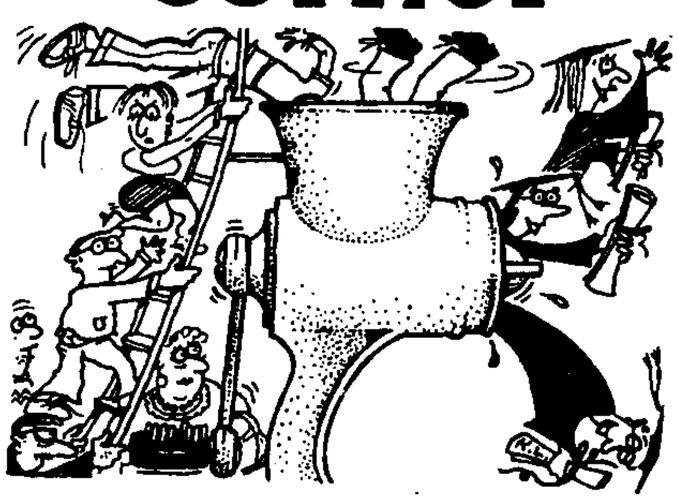
GAYATRI CHAKRAVORTY SPIVAK, University of Pittsburgh: Jacket puff for Gender Trouble by Judith Butler (Routledge)

Her [silversmith Lexi Dick's] favourite object, definitely anti-clutterish, is a plumbed-in worktop soap dispenser. "You have to call it a Fairy Liquid dispenser," she says, "or people think you mean one of those plastic things."

In fact, Dick has two of them, both in elegant chrome, one in her kitchen at home and another in her workshop. "I can't understand why anyone would spend loads of money putting in a kitchen and then plonk a Fairy Liquid bottle on the sink," she says. "It just looks naff — it's a mystery to me why everyone doesn't have one of these."

Guardian "Style Insider"

Pseuds Corner



The traditional Oxford examination is the crucible in which we were torched and burnt. It is in this crucible that we were formed. This is where the hallmark was stamped on the ingot and the ashes blown away...

Let us not be drawn into mediocrity. Students who do not yield wine when put to the press have no place in the Oxford vineyard. They belong in the more relaxed environment of the cherry orchard.

PETER WEYGANG
Letter to Oxford Today

In the thick darkness the ruffling noise sounds strange but also strangely familiar. Like an unexpected shower of rain, a rod of piercing light shatters the blackness. On the stage a small figure is illuminated, absolutely still, his shaven head bent forward as if in prayer or meditation.

For the next 90 minutes the monk-like figure will stand motionless, turned away from the world, apparently beyond time and place. And all the while, a couple of hundredweight of uncooked, dyed yellow rice will rain down on his domed head, each tiny grain hitting his pate then zinging and pinging. The monk figure does not flinch. He never even blinks.

This is Songs Of The Wanderers, a meditative piece of dance theatre that is as much a mystical experience as it is a theatrical one.

LYN GARDNER
Guardian

In outer Mongolia I had plenty of time to think about Paris. In nomads' tents, over yet another bowl of sheep entrails, it is remarkable how often one's thoughts turn to the boulevard Saint-Germain and the Cafe de Flore.

STANLEY STEWART, Daily Telegraph (winner of Travelex Travel Writers' Award 1998, best national daily newspaper feature)

CONTRIBUTORS: Hannah Johnson, Ann Keith, Anon, Francis Harvey, Gnome, James Woodall.

£10 paid for entries

In the City

RENEWED speculation that the phoney pharaoh Mohamed Fayed is coming under pressure from his nervous bankers HSBC is no surprise.The high-spending Fayed has been busily eating into his £350m credit line — £250m had been consumed by January last year and the figure is likely to be much nearer the ceiling now — with little clear evidence of how it would be repaid as distinct from refinanced other than by selling Harrods.

Evidence of the phoney pharaoh's genuine profligacy can be seen in microcosm at soccer club Fulham — Fayed's bid for a more popular appeal than being shopkeeper to the rich and famous.

The just-filed accounts for Fulham Football Leisure, through which Fayed bought the struggling second division club two years ago, reveal that by June 1998 this newfound hobby had cost more than £19m. This was the finance pumped in from its parent company in the British Virgin Islands offshore tax haven. Lest we forget: Fulham had a negative net worth of £2.7m when Fayed took over.

The Fulham Pharaohs narrowly missed promotion to the first division last season, 1997-98, and turnover rose from £2.1m to £3.7m. But this success came at a high price. The club made a £6.2m loss largely due to the soaring wage costs (£5.1m) of Fayed and England's football guru Kevin Keegan and his expensive signings (another £7.8m).

The bulk of this expensive outgoing had to be financed from borrowed money. By the end of last season Fulham Football Leisure showed an operating loss of £8.4m and a cash outflow of almost £19m after capital expenditure of £16m.

Fayed has promised to invest £30m to take Fulham into the premiership. With another season almost over and promotion to the first division all but in the bag, that target may already have been reached. But the first division would require ever further investment. Which is why HSBC may well be getting a little edgy for guess whose money is being invested.

● **LORANA SULLIVAN, who died last week aged 61, was one of the pioneers of investigative financial journalism. She was also a long-standing contributor to this column. Over almost 30 years, showing an encyclopaedic knowledge of, and unerring intuition for, City "bad guys", she successfully targeted such *Eye* favourites as Slater Walker, Rossminster, BCCI, Roberto Calvi, Jonathan Aitken and bucket shop share peddlars Chander Singh, Tom Wilmot and the mobbed up Tommy Quinn. Most recently she focused her exceptional talent for dismantling even the most complex corporate webs by exhaustive examination of company records on Mohamed Fayed. "I believe that we have proved that he is a crook and is not worthy of obtaining a British passport," was her verdict on the phoney pharaoh. A view shared by all those who had the privilege of sharing her expertise.**

UNNOTICED in the hoopla over Michael Ashcroft's *de rigueur* complexity-personified takeover bid for Corporate Services Group is that the net result will be to greatly increase the tax free benefits of Belize's greatest export.

Should the £200m-plus CSG deal go through, all its dividends will flow upwards through Guernsey to Ashcroft's renamed BHI Corporation based in the Central American tax haven. And there the man who liked Belize so much that he bought the country has extracted a tax free holiday for BHI, soon to be New Carlisle Group, which runs until at least 2020!

All of which will provide ample resources for Ashcroft to consolidate his role as an offshore Mr Money Bags to the Tory party, which is fast going the way of the two small political parties in Belize who discovered themselves trapped in Ashcroft's stranglehold as Belize's most powerful investor. A lesson which should also not be lost on the directors of CSG, who have rushed to embrace the predatory Ashcroft in order to escape irate shareholders determined to punish their stunning incompetence which has forced the company to write off £20m and make two profit warnings. This caused the shares to collapse and opened the door to the ever opportunistic Ashcroft.

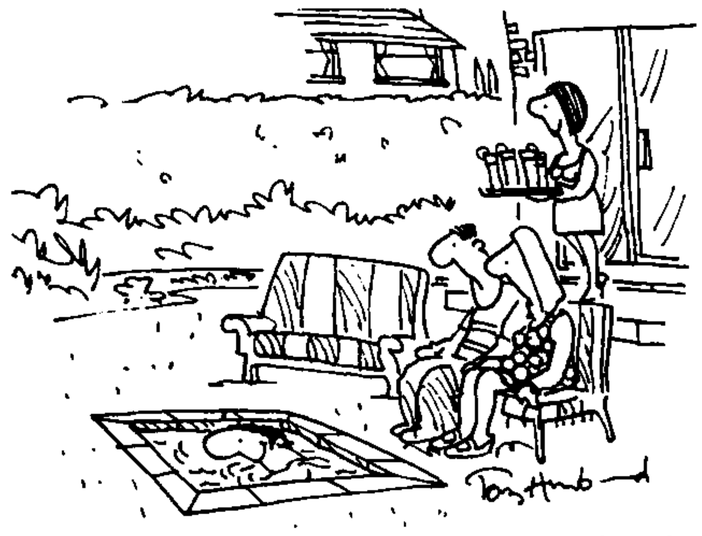
He twice came to rescue another friend in need — Tony Berry. But Ashcroft's intervention only helped to propel Berry, whom he had financed, out of the Blue Arrow board room and into a Department of Timidity & Inaction investigation from which neither man emerged well. Post-Blue Arrow, the Ashcroft offshore cheque book was opened to enable Berry to start up again in the employment agency business with Recruit. But last year Ashcroft needed Recruit for his stock market comeback vehicle Carlisle. A deal was forced through at a price minority shareholder Berry did not find very nice. Proving that what goes around comes around, if Ashcroft manages to takeover CSG then he will own both Blue Arrow and Recruit.

The deservedly desperate CSG directors welcomed Ashcroft because he insisted they must keep their jobs as a condition of his bid. But chairman Jeffrey Fowler, who may not have been unknown to Ashcroft, has already been forced out by institutional shareholders. So Ashcroft could yet walk away.

But even if he stays, CSG directors should remember what happened to another under-performing Ashcroft ally — Tony Berry — once his usefulness was all used up. Michael Ashcroft is a man loved only by those in need, such as the Tories and CSG's directors, or in greed, like those who advise and back him. But the long trail back through Hawley and ADT to the early 80s shows that few of those who have done business with him have ever come out ahead and many have come to regret it. And for shareholders there is only one winner. No prizes for guessing who that was with ADT and who it will be with Carlisle.

AS members of Britain's billionaire elite it would be thought that any business venture proposed by the Hinduja brothers would be greeted with enthusiasm. But not, it seems, their plan to open a British bank aimed at the wealthy Asian community not just in Britain but around the world.

> If we are going to be on any list it would be a white list, said Peter Crook, the director-general of the Guernsey Financial Services Commission.
>
> 'We appreciate the danger of appearing on a blacklist.'
>
> *Guernsey Weekly Press*



"I must say I'm a little disappointed with their swimming pool"

The three Indian brothers disclosed their banking ambitions in December 1995 amid much talk of founding the British Asian Bank. Since then silence. So what has gone wrong with what was unkindly and incorrectly dubbed "Son of BCCI". Indeed the whole Hinduja idea was to prove an Asian bank did not have to be like the Bank of Conmen and Cocaine International. Anyway, BCCI was run by Pakistanis!

There were considerable discussions and meetings between the Hindujas and the Bank of England, although no formal application was ever made to form the bank. But these soundings were not entirely successful, despite the fact that the Hindujas controlled the IndusInd bank in India and, more significantly, Swiss regulators had agreed to the opening of the Hinduja-linked Amas bank. This, despite a legal battle in Switzerland between the Indian authorities and the Hindujas over access to bank accounts linked to commission payments arising out of the Bofors scandal. The Hindujas denied any of their Swiss accounts had received commissions from the Bofors arms deal with India.

Bank regulators were much more concerned about the ownership structure and control of the proposed bank. It would seem that to get round these problems the Hindujas looked for a major international banking partner. Talks were held with Midland and HSBC. But when HSBC insisted on having a majority stake and management control the talks ended.

Last year the Hindujas turned to Royal Bank of Scotland. But once again talks failed over RBS's wish to have both management and ownership control as well as the lion's share of profits.

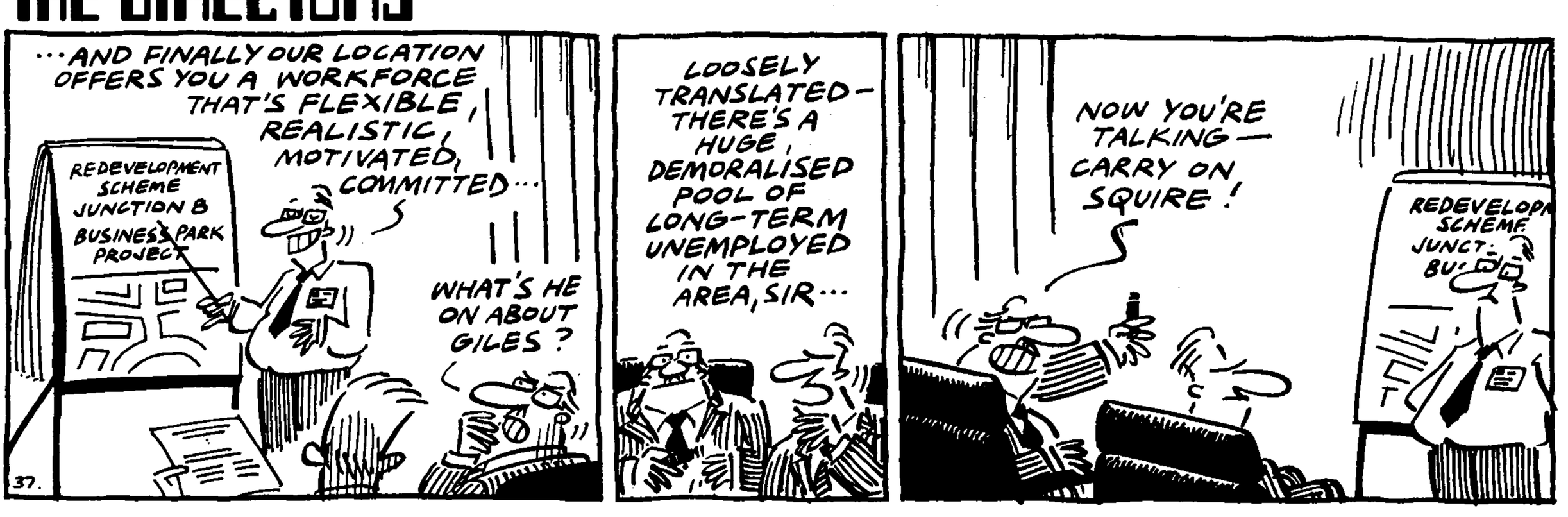
Another problem was that City regulators made it clear that any major bank would be expected to provide 100 percent support for the proposed British Asian bank even if it owned 50 percent or less of the shares. One reason for this was that the Hinduja plan envisaged several Asian shareholders with their own stake and therefore liability being perhaps less than 10 percent. Whoever ran the bank would have to stand behind it as the lender of last resort. This was not an attractive proposition.

The British Asian Bank may not be dead but it seems firmly asleep, which is both a pity and a mystery when everyone, including the Labour government for the Dome, is only too happy to welcome the Hindujas and their money.

'Slicker'

THE DIRECTORS

DREDGE/RIGG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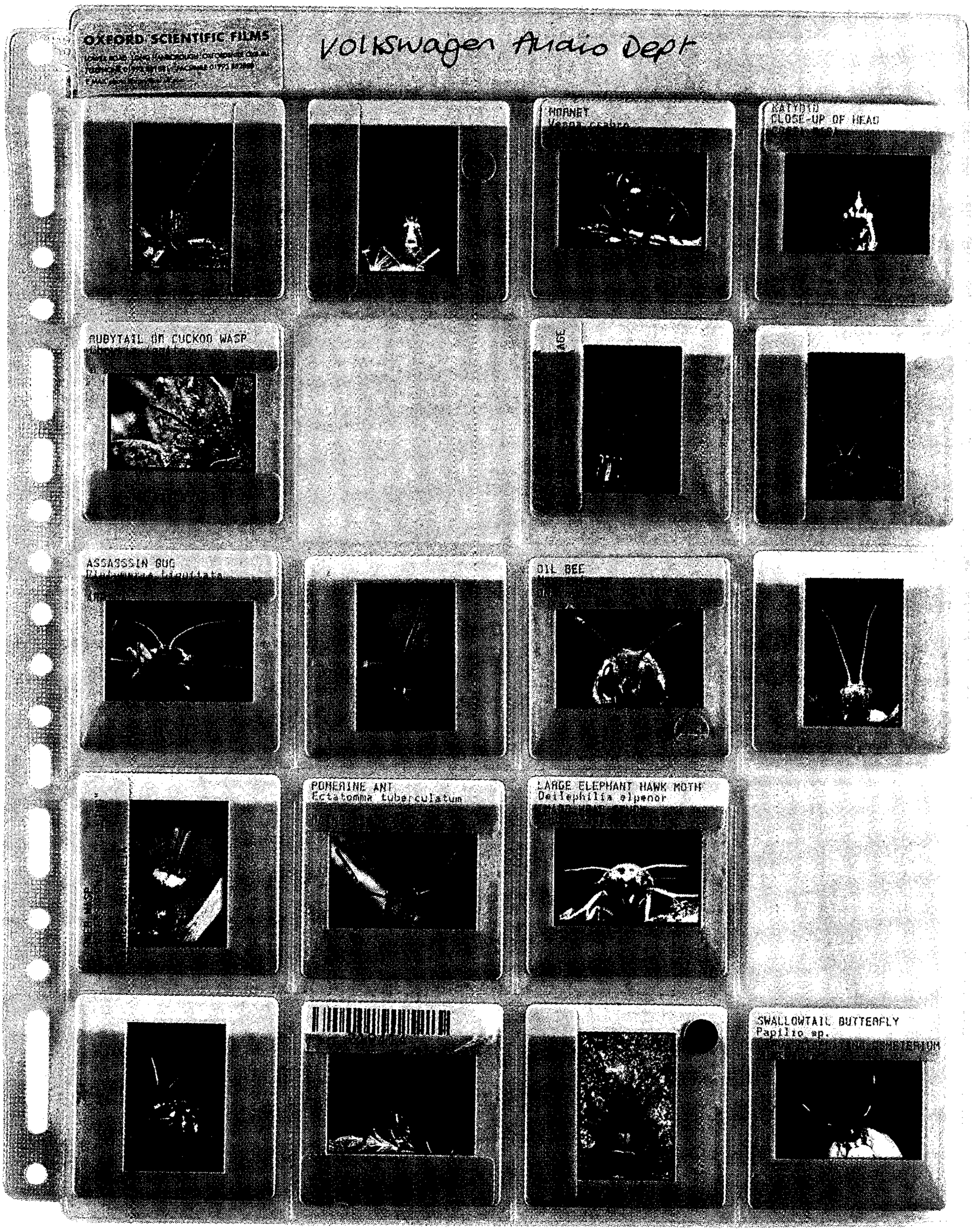

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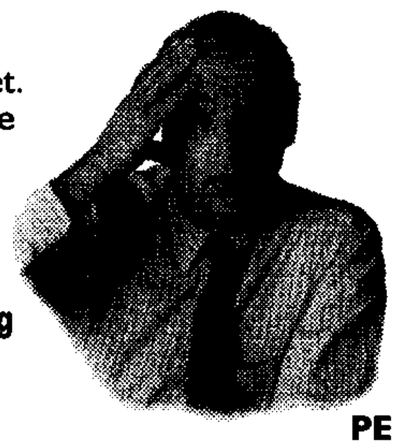

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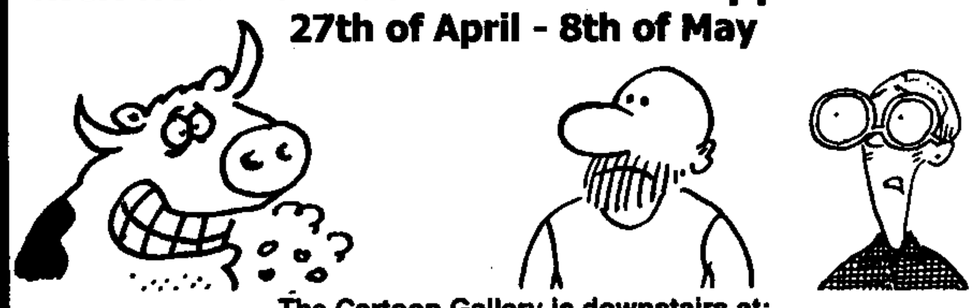

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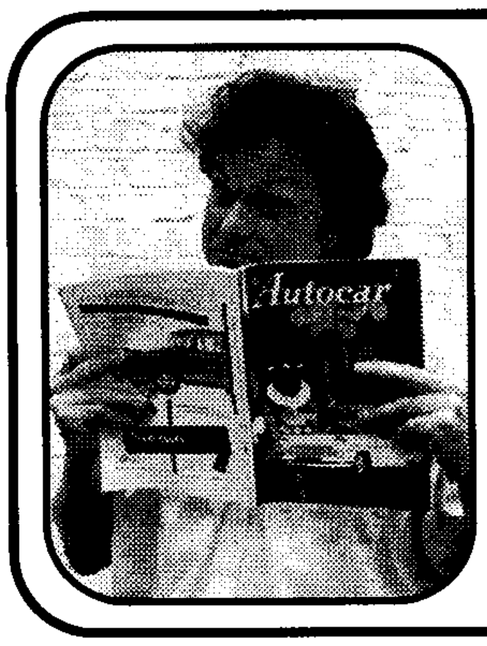

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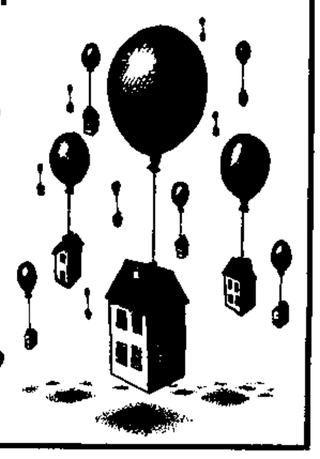

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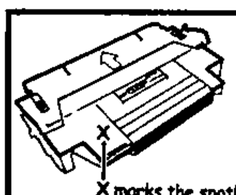

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SPEECHWRITING by Mitch Murray – see page 31...

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tall, slim, late 40s, in celbiate marriage,
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for long term relationship
to spoil and pamper in every way.
Discretion assured.
Life is short and now is the time
for you to make it happen.
Photo please.
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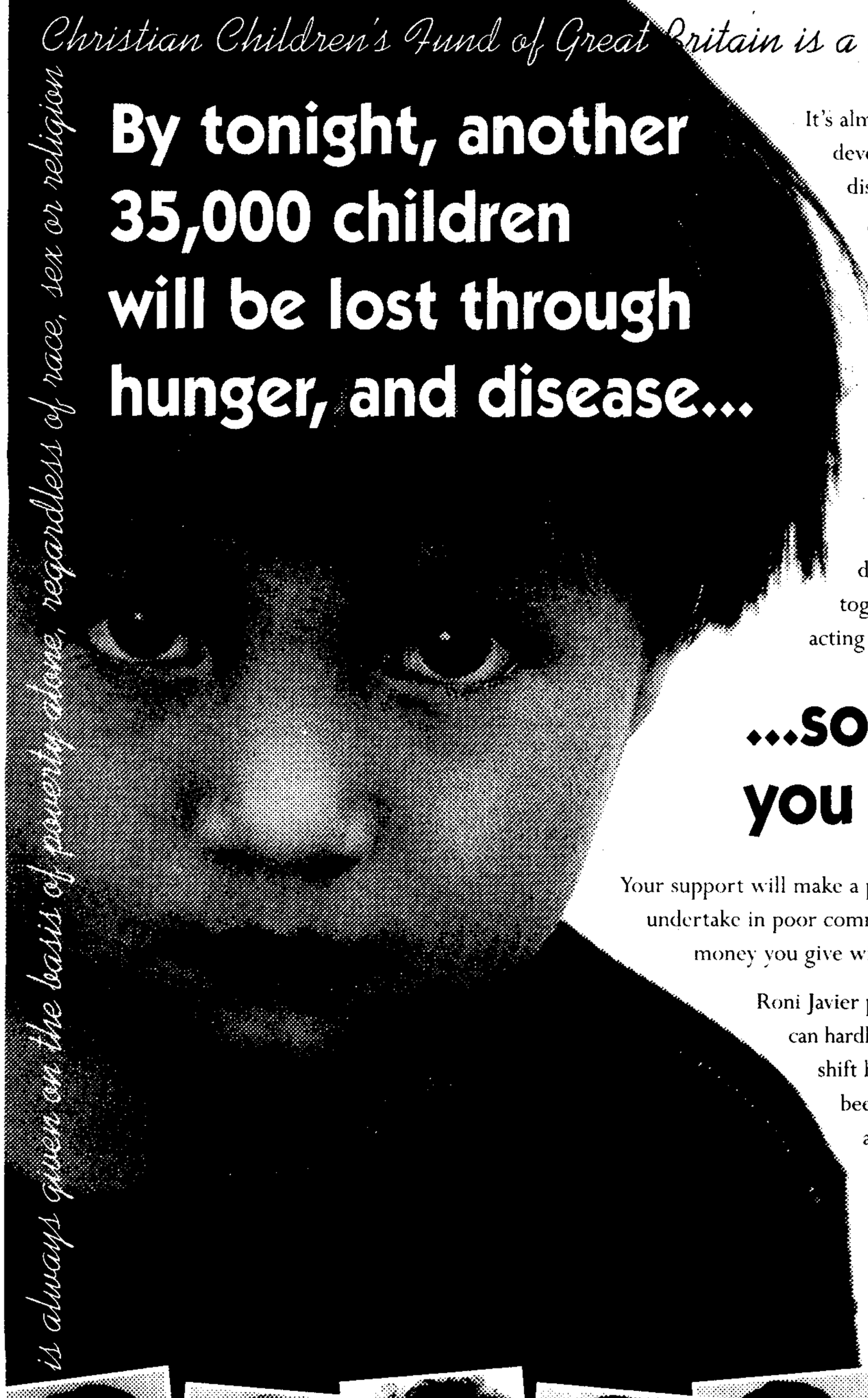
Christian Children's Fund of Great Britain is a humanitarian, non-denominational registered charity working with locally owned, long-term projects throughout the developing world and Eastern Europe to help living healthcare, education and eventual self-sufficiency to children and communities in need. Support is always given on the basis of poverty alone, regardless of race, sex or religion

By tonight, another 35,000 children will be lost through hunger, and disease...



It's almost unbelievable, yet every day 35,000 children in developing countries die from malnutrition and preventable diseases. That's more than 24 every minute!

The cause for most of this terrible suffering is poverty. Without enough food, clothing and medical care, let alone a proper education, the future for a child born in poverty is often tragically short. Many die from hunger and disease. Millions more face a daily struggle simply to survive.

Yet all it takes is £15 a month to sponsor a child, bringing real hope into their life and giving both them and their community the chance of a decent future.

It may seem insignificant to sponsor just one of so many desperately needy children, but by doing so you will join together with the many thousands of other like-minded people acting as sponsors through Christian Children's Fund.

...so why do we ask you to help just one?

Your support will make a priceless contribution towards the vital work that we undertake in poor communities around the world. We guarantee that 80% of the money you give will go directly to help a child and their community.

Roni Javier pictured here, lives with his mother in the Honduras, in what can hardly be called a house. It has a straw roof, a dirt floor and a make-shift hearth for cooking. There is no sanitation and Roni has often been ill and undernourished. Now Roni has a sponsor we are able to work constantly to see to his health and development. The more sponsors we can find, the more children like Roni can be helped to a safer and brighter future.

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Your sponsorship can be for as long as you wish – six months, a year, or until the child leaves school. You will receive a photo of the child, details of his or her family background, regular progress reports and letters from the child you are supporting.

Yes, I would like to sponsor a child

PE 43

Send to Robert Edwards, Christian Children's Fund, 4 Bath Place, Rivington Street, London EC2A 3DR or CCF GB, FREEPOST WC4509, London EC2B 2FN (no stamp needed in UK)

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I would prefer to pay £15 by Visa / Mastercard /Access / Amex / Diners ☐

Card No ☐☐☐☐ ☐☐☐☐ ☐☐☐☐ ☐☐☐☐

Valid from ☐☐ - ☐☐ Expiry Date: ☐☐ - ☐☐

Signature for card payments _____

Name _____

Address _____

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I prefer a boy ☐ girl ☐ either ☐

In any country **OR**

Latin America	☐	**Eastern Europe**	☐
Asia	☐	Bulgaria	☐
Africa	☐	Romania	☐
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Please send my information pack today ☐

I cannot sponsor a child but would like to donate a gift of £ ☐

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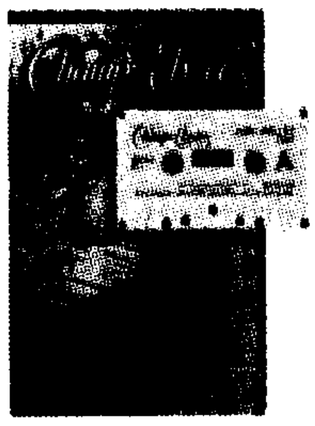
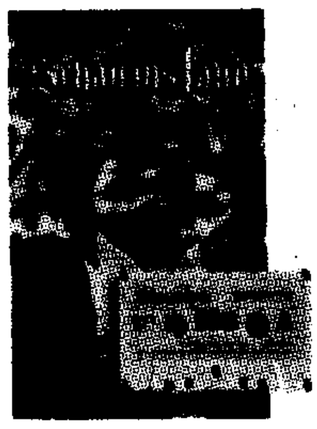
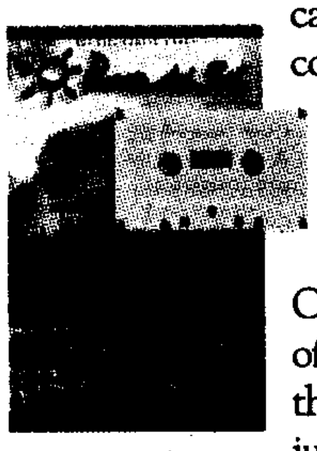


Champs-Elysées in French: The rich traditions and contemporary *élan* of France resonate through each edition of *Champs-Elysées*. Reports on urban violence and unemployment in France, a promenade through the Hautes Vosges, and a comprehensive look at soccer mania in France are among the recent features on this lively French-language audiomagazine. Coming up: a visit to Brive-la-Gaillarde in the Dordogne.



Schau ins Land in German: Professional journalists in Germany, Austria, and Switzerland provide a fascinating overview of German-speaking Europe every month in *Schau ins Land*. Recent programmes have included a two-part profile of Bertolt Brecht, a feature on women in the Bundeswehr, a visit to Dresden's Frauenkirche, a look at Swiss efforts to rebuild the Titanic, and a report on the 50th anniversary of the world-renowned Max Planck Institute.



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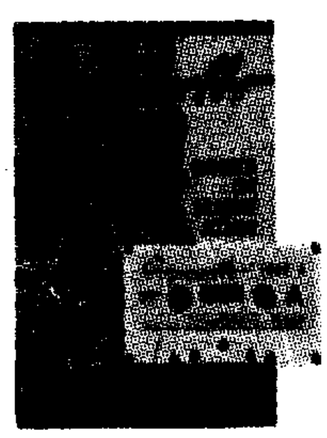
Acquerello italiano in Italian: Produced six times a year in Rome, *Acquerello italiano* showcases the vitality and style of contemporary Italy. Recent programmes have included a look at the fashion industry in Milan, interviews with Oscar-winning director Giuseppe Tornatore and World Trade Organization head Renato Ruggiero, and features on the Shroud of Turin, the controversial cancer treatment of Luigi Di Bella, Rome's Borghese Gallery, and the ever-popular Harry's Bar in Venice.



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Published by Pressdram Ltd, 6 Carlisle St, London W1 5RG. 0171 437 4017. Printed by East End Offset Ltd, Empson St, London E3 3LT. Distributed by PE Distribution Ltd, Mortimer Hse, 230/236 Lavender Hill,.SW11 1LE 0171 223 9971